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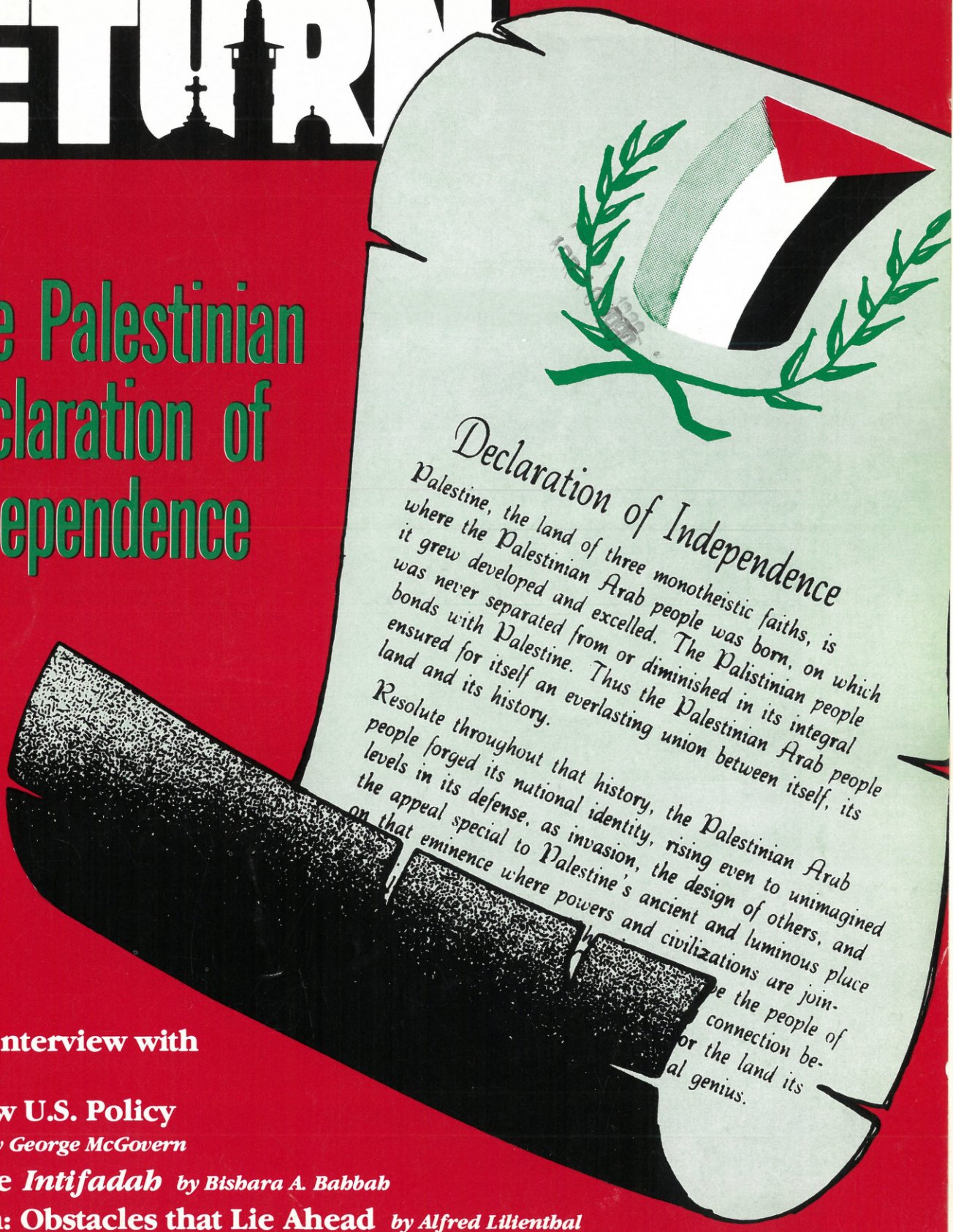
AN INTERNATIONAL PALESTINIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

THE RETURN

The Palestinian Declaration of Independence



An Exclusive Interview with Abu Iyad

Time for a New U.S. Policy in Palestine *by George McGovern*

A Year into the *Intifadah* *by Bishara A. Babbah*

A State is Born: Obstacles that Lie Ahead *by Alfred Lilienthal*

Israel's Men Occupy Key Positions in the U.S. Government *by Michael Saba*

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AN INTERNATIONAL PALESTINIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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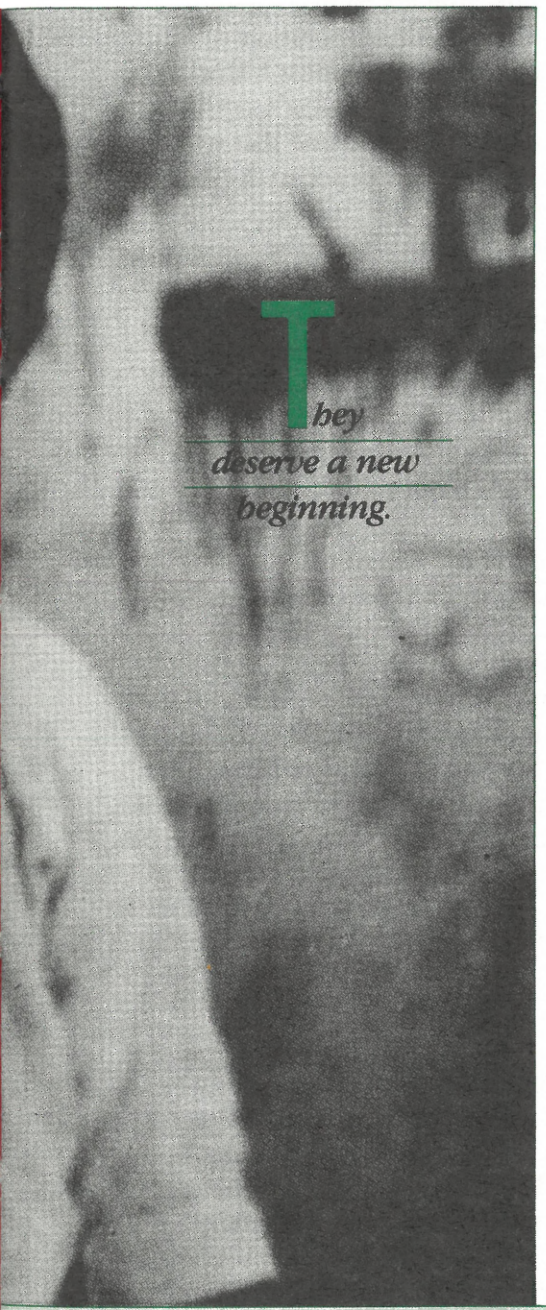

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THE RETURN is an international Palestinian monthly magazine. It is published in in Washington, D.C. by *The Jerusalem Press Service*. The cover price is U.S. $4.00. Subscriptions are $24.00 per year. For additional savings, see envelope in the center of the magazine.

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Publishers are urged to send books relating to the Middle East for reviews.

A Wise Move At Last

During its entire eight-year tenure, the decision to open a "substantive dialogue" with the Palestine Liberation Organization is the Reagan administration's most historic move affecting the Middle East.

Although it is a step in the right direction, and one that will help pave the way for a more reasonable chance for peace in the Middle East, one cannot help being cautious.

When U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz made the announcement, he specifically said that the United States will open a "substantive dialogue." Undoubtedly, Israel and its many friends in the U.S. Congress, will do everything within their power to minimize the impact of such a dialogue and keep it—as implied—a mere dialogue.

On the other hand, the Palestinians expect more than an opportunity to sit down and talk with American officials. They expect results.

They expect movement toward the fulfillment of Palestinian aspirations for an independent state. Anything less would be unacceptable and unjust.

The United States, in view of the fact that it is Israel's most important ally and supporter, is expected to exert pressure on Israel to resolve the Palestine question once and for all. Again, that means the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Therefore, there has to be a U.S. commitment to achieve that purpose, even if it means disagreeing with the Israelis.

Dialogue with the United States does not mean the end of the Palestinian Uprising/*Intifadah*. The Uprising will only end when Israeli troops pull out of occupied Palestinian land. Otherwise, Israel will be comfortable and find it all too easy to maintain its occupation of Palestinian lands, and its subjugation of 1.7 million people.

On the Palestinian front, the conciliatory statements made by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Stockholm, Sweden and in Geneva, Switzerland will undoubtedly infuriate a number of Palestinian factions. That will not be easy to deal with. But the Palestinians believe in democracy, and the minority will have to live with the decisions of the majority.

It is harder to make peace than it is to make war. The Palestinians are taking the necessary risks. Let us hope that all other parties to the conflict, particularly the Israelis, have the courage to make peace.

The United States at last has taken a step in the right direction. Only time will tell whether the U.S. decision to talk to the PLO, although belated, was a critical one in the search for peace in the Middle East.

A Year into the Intifadah

Bishara A. Bahbah

The Palestinian *Intifadah*/Uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, erupted on December 9, 1987. It has done more to advance the cause of the people of Palestine than major wars and years of diplomacy. At the same time, the Uprising has generated opportunities and serious challenges for the Palestinian leadership.

The Uprising has acted as a catalyst to bring to the surface a new set of realities about Israel and its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The Uprising has also engendered major transformations in Palestinian attitudes and behavior.

The first and most important reality that the Uprising has brought to the surface is that Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem cannot continue. The Palestinians have demonstrated that they abhor Israel's oppressive occupation and that they are willing to die fighting for their freedom.

More precisely, the Uprising has demonstrated that there can be no return to the status quo that existed before December 9, 1987. The fact that the Uprising has lasted an entire year is indicative that it has become the new way of life. If the Uprising ends, or even slows down, Israel will be able to claim victory and continue unabated with its occupation.

Mubarak Awad, the Palestinian-American nonviolent advocate who was deported by Israel to the United States on June 13, stated that the *Intifadah* has demonstrated that the Palestinian people have conquered fear. Although over the past 21 years of occupation there were many courageous acts of resistance, the resistance was never on a large scale, nor did it last a long time. This conquering of fear has introduced a new element that will make it difficult and costly for Israel to maintain its control of the Occupied Territories/occupied Palestine.

The *Intifadah* has taught the Palestinians that it pays to take charge of their destiny. The Palestinians have repeatedly been disappointed by the use and abuse of the Palestine issue by brotherly Arab governments. Additionally, they have discovered that relying on the Arabs' political and even military muscle has led the Palestinians nowhere.

The *Intifadah* has demonstrated that the Palestinians are willing to pay a heavy price to get rid of Israel's occupation. Over 300 Palestinians were killed in the first 10 months of the Uprising, not including the scores of unborn babies who were killed when Israeli soldiers attacked homes and other confined areas with tear gas causing miscarriages. At least 20,000 Palestinians were wounded and hospitalized. At any given moment, Israel holds a minimum of 5,000 Palestinian political prisoners. About half of those are held in unsanitary and crowded conditions, for six-month periods, without trial or legal due process.

Death, injuries, and imprisonment are the most conspicuous sacrifices by the Palestinian people. Israel managed to demolish hundreds of Palestinian houses, deport tens of Palestinian activists, and restrict the movements of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian people. The Israelis have gone to the extent of cutting off telephone communications between the West Bank and Gaza, and the rest of the world.

On another front, Palestinian

Dr. Bishara A. Bahbah is editor-in-chief of The Return.

school children and university students have lost an entire academic year due to Israel's decision to shut down educational institutions. The Israelis have even outlawed private gatherings in which students are tutored.

Notwithstanding the sacrifices, the Palestinian Uprising has not slowed down, nor has it shown any signs of ending.

Another important lesson that the *Intifadah* has taught the Palestinians is the need for self-discipline and effective organization. Palestinians have come to the conclusion that in order to elude Israel's heavy-handed treatment of any potential leadership, they must organize on a community level and involve as many people as possible.

It is estimated that there are 60-70 organized Popular Committees in occupied Palestine. These deal, on a local level, with issues relating to health, education, water, social welfare, and the like. In effect, what is developing is a local infrastructure that is taking charge of the Palestinians' day-to-day affairs. Simultaneously, Israel's own administration in occupied Palestine is collapsing.

Among the Arab countries, the Uprising has refocused attention on the Palestine question. The 1987 Arab summit that was held in Amman, Jordan almost ignored the Palestine issue and concentrated its attention on the war between Iran and Iraq. In fact, it has been argued that Palestinian disillusionment with the results and emphasis of the summit played a role in the eruption of the Uprising.

The most important development in the Arab arena directly related to the Uprising has been the decision by King Hussein of Jordan to sever all legal and administrative ties to the West Bank. The Palestinians who were facing the Israelis with stones and bare bodies made it unequivocally clear that once Israel's occupation ends, Jordanian rule over the West Bank and Gaza will be equally unacceptable. To Jordan, the Uprising has demonstrated that neither Jordanian funds nor passports can help Jordan govern the West Bank. To the world, this has shown that the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people is the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Internationally, the Uprising has generated tremendous sympathy and support for the people of Palestine. During the first few months of the Uprising, the Western media diligently covered Israel's brutal attempts to suppress the Uprising. On their television screens, people all over the world witnessed Israel's other side. No longer was Israel viewed as the David facing the Arab Goliath. The Palestinians emerged as the new David.

The most visible fruit of the *Intifadah* has been the Declaration of Independence for the State of Palestine. The Declaration was coupled with a new political offensive based on the acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for holding an international peace conference regarding the Palestine question. The acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for the recognition of all states in the region, including Israel, was an important move by the Palestine National Council. In part, it was intended to satisfy U.S. pre-conditions for holding talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

As of the end of November, over

Palestinians in line to get a new Israeli-issued identity card, Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza. Rick Reinhard

66 countries had recognized the newly created state. The PLO's political initiative was hailed by the vast majority of the world community with the notable excepion of Israel and the United States.

The U.S. decision to deny PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat an entry visa to address the U.N. General Assembly was widely criticized by the international community as a violation of the U.S. role as host country to the international body. More importantly, the Palestinian people are interpreting the U.S. move as another example of its blind support for Israel and of Secretary of State Shultz's hatred of the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians.

Notwithstanding, the declaration of the State of Palestine is a very important legal, political, and psychological move. It represents the shifting of the Palestinian struggle from one level to another.

The Palestinians who were facing the Israelis with stones and bare bodies made it unequivocally clear that once Israel's occupation ends, Jordanian rule over the West Bank and Gaza will be equally unacceptable.

In the political statement that was issued at the conclusion of the PNC conference, the conferees affirmed their rejection of terrorism in all its forms. Although not officially, the often-quoted PLO Charter of 1968 was abrogated in a number of ways. For example, in the political statement, the Palestine National Council accepted U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181 of 1947 which partitioned Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. In article 19 of the 1968 PLO Charter, Resolution 181 was characterized as "null and void."

The Palestinians were able to meet, discuss issues, disagree on strategy and tactics and still maintain national unity. To the

A mother with her children amidst the ruins of their demolished home, Beita, West Bank. Rick Reinhard

Another important lesson that the Intifadah *has taught the Palestinians is the need for self-discipline and effective organization.*

disappointment of many skeptics, the Palestinian opposition, particularly groups on the left of the political spectrum, did not walk out. The opposition voted against the political statement adopted by the Palestine National Council, but declared its respect for the rule of the majority. This has clearly disarmed many from arguing that the Palestinians do not have a single body or institution that represents them.

To conclude, the developments over the past twelve months have significantly altered the political map of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinians have taken matters into their own hands and have started to chart the course of their history themselves. The Israelis, willy-nilly, are starting to realize that they cannot hold on to the Occupied Territories without paying a high price.

The PLO's new political initiative presents new challenges and opportunities for both the Palestinians and the Israelis. The Palestinians have come to realize that the use of military power is not going to liberate any part of Palestine. At the same time, resisting the occupation, without the use of military force, is an imperative. Otherwise, Israel will find it easy to continue its occupation of Arab lands.

The Israelis, on the other hand, need to understand that the path to peace and security is not in the continued occupation of Arab lands and control of at least 1.7 million people. The path to peace is one that guarantees equal respect of the human and political rights of both Palestinians and Israelis. ■

Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad)

Arafat's Visit To The United Nations Was Intended To Explain The PNC Decision And To Answer Any Questions And To Clarify Any Points

At Algiers, We Reaffirmed Our Opposition To Terrorism

The Next Phase Depends To a Large Extent On The European Countries

President-elect George Bush Will Take A More Positive Approach And Will Support The Convening Of An International Peace Conference

Bishara A. Bahbah

Salah Khalaf, known as Abu Iyad, is PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's deputy within Fatah. Abu Iyad is also a member of the PLO Central Committee. This interview was conducted by Bishara A. Bahbah on the telephone on November 30, 1988.

Q: In your opinion, what is the significance of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence and the political statement issued at the conclusion of the recent Palestine National Council (PNC) meeting in Algiers? Is it, as some allege, a mere public relations effort on the part of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)?

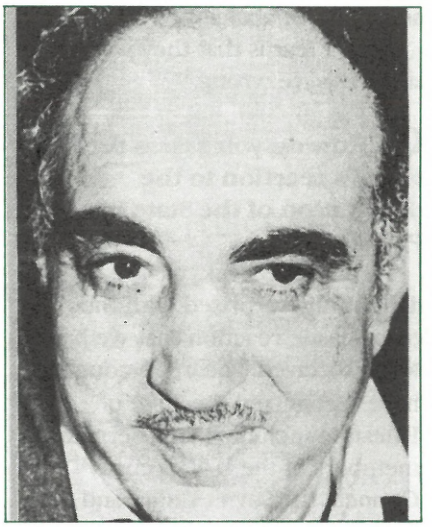
The historic decision taken by the PNC was our way of informing the world that we want a peaceful solution to the Palestine question. However, we are also telling the world that for peace to be established, there has to be a Palestinian state.

To satisfy the concerns of the international community, we agreed to accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for the international peace conference that will convene to settle the Palestine question. We have also agreed to the principle of a state that will be confederated with Jordan.

To satisfy the demands of the Palestinian people, we added that the Palestinians have the right to self-determination.

At Algiers, we took a clear position regarding terrorism. We reaffirmed our opposition to terrorism by expounding on the 1985 Cairo Declaration at which time the PLO committed itself not to engage in military activities against Israel outside of the region.

During the Algiers meeting we went the extra mile to positively respond to the urging of our friends in the international community, particularly in Europe.



Q: Is the PLO planning to announce the formation of a provisional government any time soon?

A provisional government will not be set up until we witness more favorable conditions on the international front. I am referring specifically to the negative position

currently held by the United States. We believe that the formation of the provisional government, which was left to the discretion of the PLO's Central Committee, is tied to the prospects of holding an international peace conference.

Q: What sort of deals or compromises did Chairman Yasser Arafat have to accept to prevent the Palestinian left from walking out of the PNC meeting?

The leftist groups within the PNC acted in a restrained and positive manner. They were sure that the United States would ignore and brush aside the important concessions by the PNC. They, nevertheless, registered opposition to the political statement by voting negatively or abstaining.

What I fear is that they were right and we were wrong.

Q: How do you assess the world's reaction to the declaration of the State of Palestine?

To be quite frank, we are delightfully surprised with the enthusiastic reaction that we have so far received. So far, 66 countries have recognized the State of Palestine including two permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

I believe that very shortly a number of Western European countries will also recognize the new state.

Q: Why do you believe that such a large number of countries has reacted so favorably?

These countries were impressed with the contents of the Declaration of Independence. They were also encouraged by the moderate and positive political statement that was adopted by the PNC. We have demonstrated, once again, that the PLO is a responsible party seeking a peaceful solution.

Q: Do the Declaration of Independence and the political statement adopted by the PNC mean that the 1968 PLO Covenant is null and void?

Normally, the political statement adopted by the PNC represents the position of the PLO.

Countries that Have Recognized the Newly Declared State of Palestine

(as of November 30, 1988)

ARAB COUNTRIES

1. Algeria
2. Tunisia
3. Iraq
4. Kuwait
5. Saudi Arabia
6. Libya
7. Bahrain
8. United Arab Emirates
9. Qatar
10. Jordan
11. North Yemen
12. South Yemen
13. Djibouti
14. Mauritania
15. Morocco
16. Sudan
17. Egypt
18. Somalia
19. Lebanon

ASIA

1. Turkey
2. India
3. Malaysia
4. Indonesia
5. Pakistan
6. Sri Lanka
7. Maldives
8. Afghanistan
9. Bangladesh
10. Brunei
11. Laos
12. China
13. North Korea
14. Vietnam
15. Mongolia
16. Cambodia
17. Nepal

AFRICA

1. Madagascar
2. Zambia
3. Tanzania
4. Senegal
5. Mali
6. Zimbabwe
7. Ghana
8. Guinea-Conakry
9. Guinea-Bissau
10. Burkina Faso
11. Comoros
12. Seychelles
13. Nigeria
14. Gambia
15. Cape Verde
16. Niger
17. Mozambique
18. Burundi

EASTERN EUROPE

1. Yugoslavia
2. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
3. German Democratic Republic
4. Czechoslovakia
5. Hungary
6. Rumania
7. Albania
8. Bulgaria

WESTERN EUROPE

1. Malta
2. Cyprus

LATIN AMERICA

1. Cuba
2. Nicaragua

SOURCE: Palestine Affairs Center, Washington, D.C.

Q: The political statement adopted by the PNC affirmed "the need to convene an effective international conference devoted to the Middle East and to consider that the international conference be held on the basis of U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 and, according to U.N. resolutions specific to the Palestine problem." When referring to the U.N. resolutions specific to the Palestine problem, does that include the U.N. General Assembly Resolution of 1975 that equated Zionism with racism?

The only U.N. resolutions we are referring to are those resolutions affecting the Palestine question and the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Q: Do you believe that the PLO has satisfied the conditions set by the United States in order to initiate negotiations with the PLO?

Yes, the PLO has met all the criteria set forth by the United States, notwithstanding that we believe those preconditions to be unfair. In fact, the United States should not only have granted Chairman Arafat the entry visa to the United States, but also it should officially have received Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO Political Department.

Q: What was the significance of Chairman Arafat's appearance before the United Nations?

Chairman Arafat was planning to deliver personally the decisions taken by the PNC. His visit to the United Nations was also intended to explain the PNC decision and to answer any questions and clarify any points.

Chairman Arafat wanted to address the international as well as the American public to dispel any rumors about the intent of the decisions taken in Algiers.

Q: What are your expectations regarding the new Israeli government?

The Israeli elections have produced the worst possible results—the strengthening of right-wing reactionaries and ultra-Orthodox Jews. I do believe, however, that if the United States wants peace in the Middle East, then it should and can influence these extremists.

Q: Now that a state has been proclaimed and a larger than expected number of countries have recognized the state; now that the *Intifadah* in the West Bank and Gaza is in its twelfth month and still strong; now that we have witnessed the Israeli and American refusal to see the conciliatory message in the PNC's decisions; what do you expect the next phase to be?

I believe that the next phase depends to a large extent on the European countries. They will exert tremendous pressure on the United States to convene an international peace conference.

I am of the opinion that President-elect George Bush will take a more positive approach and will support the convening of an international peace conference with the participation of the PLO. When we adopted the political statement at the PNC, we were not operating in a vacuum. We have the *Intifadah* which is growing in vigor and strength. We have substantial Arab and international support. ■

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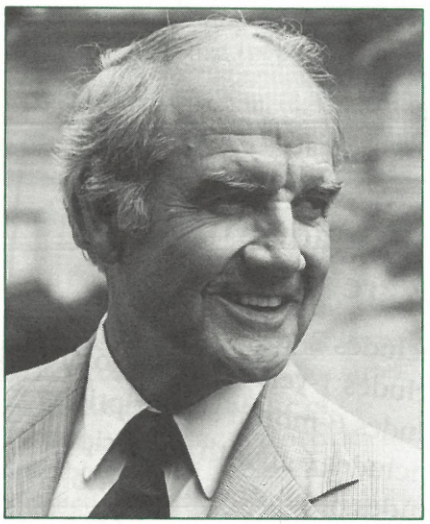
Time for a New U.S. Policy on Palestine

George McGovern



Senator George McGovern

As I write this article, two developments occupy the news headlines in the Middle East: 1) 480 members of the Palestine National Council are meeting in Algiers to declare an independent Palestine, to renounce terrorism and, indirectly, to recognize the state of Israel, and 2) the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has won a close election and has already announced that his government will not acknowledge or accept a Palestinian state.

It would appear that an important new development, perhaps at a crisis level, is unfolding in Palestinian-Israeli relations. For a year, Palestinian youths, supported overwhelmingly by the entire Palestinian population, have been conducting a persistent and potent Uprising in the West Bank and Gaza. Armed with rocks, the Palestinian youths have stood up to armed Israeli soldiers. So far, at least 310 Palestinians and 11 Israelis have lost their lives.

For weeks television and newspaper photographers offered worldwide pictures of large bands of chanting, rock-throwing Palestinians challenging Israeli soldiers. They also showed the frequently brutal and murderous response of the Israeli army. For the first time, millions of people around the globe, including vast American television audiences, saw the Palestinian struggle in a new light. The longstanding stereotypes of brave and gallant Israeli settlers in the name of independence and freedom battling irresponsible and hostile Arab terrorists began to crumble.

Now, vast numbers of television viewers have witnessed incidents in which Israeli soldiers have brutally beaten or shot unarmed Palestinian youths. In some cases the limbs of Palestinian captives were deliberately broken. Rock-throwing was responded to with automatic rifles and the demolition of homes.

There can be no doubt that all of this changed the character of the Palestinian struggle and the perception of that struggle by the outside world. Even in Israel, large numbers of Israeli citizens are touched by the bravery and dedication of the Palestinian youths. And

George McGovern is a former U.S. senator from South Dakota and the 1972 Democratic presidential nominee.

they are offended by the hard-line response of their government and the brutality of the Israeli army. In the United States—Israel's most valuable ally—the response was similar.

For many years, most experts on the Middle East have held that the key to unlock the crisis lies in an exchange of Israeli-occupied territory for peace between Arabs and Israelis. The centerpiece of such an exchange would be the creation of an independent Palestinian homeland on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Significantly, a Gallup poll in April of this year showed that 53 percent of the American people believed that the United States should seek PLO involvement in peace negotiations. In fact, the survey show that 35 percent of Americans support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Although 35 percent is not a majority, it is significant. More than one out of three Americans favors an independent Palestinian state despite the long-held opposition to this view by the Israeli government and many circles in Washington.

Last June, following three hours of talks with Israeli Prime Minister Shamir, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz publicly expressed dismay with the intransigence of the Israeli government. The press carried a front-page warning by Shultz in which he said that Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank and rejection of Palestinian rights are "a dead-end street." I agree fully with Secretary Shultz's warning to Israel. I also agree with Secretary Shultz's warning that Israel is damaging its international standing by its hard-line stance toward the dissenters and its deportation of Palestinian critics. When a government becomes afraid of its dissenters, that government rests on a shaky moral foundation.

For many years, most experts on the Middle East have held that the key to unlock the crisis lies in an exchange of Israeli-occupied territory for peace between Arabs and Israelis. The centerpiece of such an exchange would be the creation of an independent Palestinian homeland on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Even inside Israel, numerous critics are objecting to the hard line being pursued toward the Palestinians by the Shamir government.

The Jerusalem Post reports that an increasing number of Israeli conscripts are refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories in protest of Israel's repressive policies. Recently 107 Israeli high school students sent a letter to the Israeli defense minister saying they could not carry out "acts of oppression and occupation" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In January, 160 Israeli army reservists signed a declaration that they would "refuse to take part in suppressing the [U]prising and insurrection in the Occupied Territories."

High ranking Israelis primarily in the Labor party—including Shimon Peres, Ezer Weizman, and Abba Eban—have called for an international conference to address the Palestinian issue. Many Israelis as well as growing numbers of American Jews believe that the Palestinian issue must be addressed and that the Palestinians are entitled to a homeland. But these voices, both in America and in Israel, are still a minority.

Now the Palestinians have proclaimed an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They have also renounced terrorism and accepted Israel as a permanent fact of life. Thus far, the Israeli government does not accept these initiatives, but follows rather closely the conditions the United States has laid down as necessary for American support for negotiations with the PLO and possible settlement of the Palestinian issue.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has called for President-elect George Bush to develop a new policy on the Middle East. "I am asking President Bush to have a new policy, not just a policy on behalf of Israel. We are not asking for partiality, just fairness and justice and our right to self-determination."

I strongly believe that our new president should respond to this new challenge with a new policy—not to please Chairman Arafat, but to serve the interests of the United States, Israel, the Palestinians, and all the people of the Middle East. The time is long overdue for negotiations with all the parties to the Middle East conflict based on justice, evenhandedness and self-determination for all people including the Palestinians.

The Palestinian problem which is central to the Arab-Israeli conflict simply must be resolved. It must be resolved first of all because justice for the Palestinians demands a solution. It must be resolved because it disturbs the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli

conflict is wasting resources, damaging commerce, blocking regional economic development, and sacrificing young lives. It is the most critical and urgent foreign-policy crisis in the world today. President-elect Bush should take control of the Middle East issue, push it to the top of the agenda, master the problems, and then push with all his strength and wisdom for a just and permanent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

If we can achieve such a settlement, the Middle East desert can begin to bloom, the Jordan River can be developed to benefit the whole region, the United States and the Soviet Union and our allies can cooperate in raising standards of living, assisting security, and expanding commerce and development in the Middle East.

The people and the government of the United States have no quarrel with the Arab World. Our only problem there is the Arab-Israeli dispute, and that dispute must now be resolved. It is foreign-policy challenge number 1. I challenge the next president of the United States to treat it so.

This is not my challenge alone. Every religion of the world calls upon us to seek peace with our brothers.

I am not making a pro-Arab proposal, nor an anti-Israel proposal. I, as an American, am calling on my government to do what is in our national interest and what is fair and just for both Israelis and Arabs. I consider myself a friend to Arabs and Israelis alike.

If I were an Israeli and a Zionist, I would worry about the present threat to Israel. If the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza is incorporated into Israel, in a short time Israel will no longer be a Jewish state, it will be outnumbered by its faster-growing Muslim and Christian population. If Israel continues to brutalize the protesting Palestinian dissenters, it will also brutalize its own young soldiers, and its way of life. Judaism will have been betrayed. If Israel keeps the West Bank and Gaza and denies its Palestinian residents full citizenship rights, Israel will lose its democracy.

So what is the answer for Israel? It should negotiate with its Arab neighbors in good faith and accept the Palestinian yearning for a homeland and a place to bury their loved ones on home soil.

For Arabs, they must recognize Israel, negotiate in good faith, and begin working for the cooperative, peaceful development of the Middle East.

May we Americans have the wisdom and the courage to join in this long-overdue imperative for peace and justice in the Middle East. ■

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Why the Intifadah?

Bernard Sabella

A famous law of physics states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Human beings, like matter and energy, act and react. This law of physics also applies to the relationships generated by a seemingly endless military occupation. When repression mounts, resistance is expected; and when dispossession and denial are the order of the day, the oppressed need to affirm themselves and their nation. Thus the *Intifadah* is a natural reaction, an equal and opposite reaction, to 21 years of occupation.

This natural phenomenon, the *Intifadah*, has caught many by surprise, but it has not been subdued in spite of Israeli measures and tactics to do away with it, and in spite of the heavy sacrifices the occupied Palestinians have incurred in the process. Why does the *Intifadah* persist? The answer is simple: The *Intifadah* is a natural reaction to Israeli occupation. Some Israeli right-wingers, like Minister of Trade and Commerce Ariel Sharon, are waiting in the wings thinking they know how to crush the *Intifadah*, once and for all. The bad news for them, however, is that the *Intifadah* is not something to be stopped or crushed. Rather, the underlying causes that led to it must be resolved. These causes have, for the last two decades, shaped the Palestinians into a national community that is willing to pay the price of bringing occupation to an end. The *Intifadah* is the antithesis of the occupation and as long as the occupation continues, in one form or another, so must the *Intifadah*.

The relationships that characterize a system of occupation are unjust by their very nature. There is no free or equal interchange in these relationships. They are based on brute force, exercised or exercisable by the occupier. The Israelis, as occupiers, have attempted early on to portray themselves as benevolent occupiers, but they were warned by wise men among them, such as Professor Yeshayaha Leibowitz, that occupation can never be benevolent, and in fact, can only lead to the moral and political decay of the occupier.

The injustices of the Israeli occupation are perhaps most vividly illustrated by a few statistics. From 1967 until the mid-eighties, before the *Intifadah*, more than 250,000 Palestinians had been imprisoned, for different lengths of time, for security reasons. This number, offered by an Israeli Human Rights group headed by Professor Israel Shahak, does not include the more than 30,000 prisoners that have been jailed during the last two years. Imprisonment without due process, especially preventive administrative detention, is patently unjust.

In addition, hundreds of homes have been destroyed or dynamited by the Israeli occupation authorities because of suspicion that a member of the household has committed a security infraction. In some cases, such as in the Beita village incident during the *Intifadah*, the occupation authorities acknowledged that they had actually destroyed homes of people who had offered humanitarian assistance to wounded Israelis.

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Other injustices, including shootings and beatings, have resulted in hundreds of Palestinians losing their lives or becoming permanently handicapped. Hundreds of others have been deported and expelled permanently from their own homes and country. These are not practices restricted to the last year during the *Intifadah*. They have been going on since the first day of the occupation.

Israeli measures and practices have been designed all along to deny the Palestinians their natural rights. Since the two large blocs in Israel, Labor and Likud, agree that no additional state should rise between Israel and Jordan, the consistent Israeli policy has been to hinder any development in Palestinian society that could eventually be used as an infrastructure for a potential Palestinian state.

Military laws and regulations, issued by the military government in the Occupied Territories, interfered with the daily aspects of life that were thought to be politically significant. These laws, and there are over 1,300 of them, affect water use, land use, agriculture (especially the planting of trees), education, news and information (censorship), and other such vital matters.

The Israeli occupation forces have organized six districts in the West Bank and one in Gaza to administer the Occupied Territories. The military governor of a district is the unannointed "king" of that district, with legislative, judicial, and executive powers all combined in one person. These powers are so great and due process so denied, that the population is often at the mercy of the personal whims and wishes of its military governor. Coordinated

A boy in a West Bank village displays empty tear-gas canisters that litter the area around his home. Rick Reinhard

from the top by tough-minded policy executors, these governors carry out the measures thought appropriate to "keep the Palestinians under control."

It is this autocratic military setup that is responsible for the expropriation of 53 percent of the lands of the West Bank and 31 percent of the lands of Gaza. The occupation authorities expropriate land for "security" reasons. They expropriate land to build Israeli settlements. Thus, they restrict Palestinians to limited, shrinking patches of land which they cannot leave. But aside from expropriation of land, the Israeli military uses its power to deport Palestinians, jail those deemed a "threat to public security" and harass those who refuse to cooperate with them. The military also uses these powers to close social and educational institutions, to ban gatherings, and to monitor the daily lives of the people. They impose curfews and soldiers conduct midnight searches in refugee camps and villages to intimidate the unarmed civilians. These searches often have a strong emotional impact on older people, but are especially traumatic for small children.

The best description of the functioning of the military government of the West Bank and Gaza is that of a police state. Palestinians often reflect that if the measures and practices applied against them were to be applied in a country, ideologically opposed to the West, then that country would continuously be singled out for violations of human and political rights and be punished accordingly. Palestinians, however, have grown accustomed to the Western, but especially the American, double standard applied to their predicament. This is reflected in the almost resigned conviction of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories

The Intifadah is not something to be stopped or crushed. Rather, the underlying causes that led to it must be resolved.

that nothing good can come out of Washington, irrespective of who sits in the White House.

Among the policies that have guided successive Israeli governments since 1967, is the obstruction of any regional leadership in the Occupied Territories. The Israeli occupation authorities do not want the Palestinians to develop their own regional leadership capable of challenging the occupation authorities. Early on in the occupation, Israel deported Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al-Sayeh, head of the Jerusalem-based Muslim Council, along with a score of leaders who refused to cooperate with them.

But cooperation has not been the only excuse for restricting or deporting Palestinian leaders: When a group of mayors and other leading personalities approached the occupation authorities during the first year of occupation to form a regional body to discuss issues of concern to the local population and its future, the answer was a firm rejection and a warning that such matters are of no concern to the local leaders. When the 1972 municipal elections took place, the Israelis made it clear that the mayors and municipal councils should restrict their activities to administrative and municipal affairs. The Israelis were always concerned that any local initiative, in political matters, would in the end turn out to be an initiative aligned with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Even pro-Jordanian personalities were never allowed to initiate regional activities. When the Palestinian National Front was organized in 1973, with prominent personalities from all walks of life, Israel monitored it with extra care and pressured its members so that by 1976 the organization was forced to go underground.

The municipal elections of 1976 best exemplified the Israeli policy of leadership obstruction. Those candidates who ran on a nationalist, pro-PLO platform were elected by the majority of the people. This surprised the Israelis and made them even more determined to restrict the newly elected mayors to their municipal mandates. In order to do so, the Israelis treated each mayor independently of the others and never allowed them to present municipal and administrative concerns as a group.

The mayors were aware that the vote of confidence the population gave them was really a vote of confidence for the PLO, and that their mandate was not strictly administrative. In 1977, together with other prominent figures, they organized the National Guidance Committee. This committee clearly called for Palestinian self-determination and rejected the autonomy proposals of the Camp David accords as an attempt to deny the Palestinians the exercise of their inalienable rights as a people.

The Israeli authorities grew impatient with the activities of the committee. In March 1982, when it became clear that the members of the committee would not accept positions as "representatives of the Palestinians" in autonomy talks to be conducted between Israel, Egypt,

and the United States, Israel dismissed the mayors and municipal councils and banned the National Guidance Committee.

Ever since March 1982, the West Bank and Gaza have been without elected municipal leaders. The administrative vacuum was filled by Israeli military personnel. But the soldiers have no background in or knowledge of municipal administration or the needs of the population.

The result was that the people, without regional leadership, turned increasingly to local bases of power: committees of women, students, workers, and professionals formed in the mid-seventies. These committees, backed by the dismissed mayors, consistently functioned on two levels: they served their constituents in daily concerns, and adhered to the nationalist line which saw in occupation the major obstacle to the fulfillment of the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. These committees, in effect, became the infrastructural base upon which the *Intifadah* has been able to sustain itself for the last 12 months.

A society cannot function without leadership. The Israelis thought that by suppressing the elected leadership, they would be able to handle the Palestinians more easily. Their thinking proved incorrect since the Occupied Territories have leaders, and the nationalist leadership reflects the nationalist constituency. When a politically conscious constituency is perpetually frustrated in its attempts to organize itself and in seeking ways to end the occupation, something must break. In 1986, the appointment of pro-Jordanian figures to run the municipalities of Ramallah, Al-Bireh, and Hebron did not solve the problem, rather, it accentuated it.

One could even argue that these appointments, together with the increased cooperation and division of labor between Israel and Jordan between 1986 and 1987, added to Palestinian frustration. The Palestinians interpreted the Israeli-Jordanian measures to mean that Israeli military occupation would continue and that any future settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict would relegate the Palestinians to a secondary role. It appeared as if the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories would have to keep up with continued military occupation, on the one hand and with Jordanian trusteeship, on the other. These certainly caused anxiety.

The message of the Intifadah *all along has been: "We, the Palestinians, are a people entitled to our independence. We have our leadership, the PLO, in which we trust and which represents us in all political matters. We know that Israel exists. We have been living under its military occupation for the last 21 years and confronting Israeli soldiers and settlers, almost daily, in the last 12 months. We are for mutual recognition based on the respect of the rights of the Palestinian people within a comprehensive and just solution. We are a peace-loving people. In spite of all the injustices perpetrated against us by the Israelis, we are still ready and willing to make peace.*

It is clear that the biggest share of the blame for the occurrence of the *Intifadah* lies firmly and squarely with the Israeli leadership of both Labor and Likud. In spite of the ideological differences that divide the two with respect to the future of the West Bank and Gaza, both blocs have been unable to produce a leadership courageous enough to face the necessity of peace. This, at a time when the Palestinians and other Arabs have been calling for the convening of an international conference to search for a comprehensive and just solution.

It is possible that Israeli leaders and politicians have become comfortable with the status quo in the Occupied Territories. It is possible that they felt no pressing need to initiate or seriously consider entering into peace talks. Their inaction and the absence of charismatic leaders among them helped divide their people. A division of a nation, when hard decisions should be made, indicates a failure in leadership or, as one Israeli acquaintance of mine confided in me, it is a leadership that looks to win elections but seems to care less about losing the country. It is not surprising therefore that in their political formulations both blocs seem determined not to acknowledge the legitimate

rights of the Palestinian people to national self-determination. The message of the *Intifadah* all along has been:

> "We, the Palestinians, are a people entitled to our independence. We have our leadership, the PLO, in which we trust and which represents us in all political matters. We know that Israel exists. We have been living under its military occupation for the last 21 years and confronting Israeli soldiers and settlers, almost daily, in the last 12 months. We are for mutual recognition based on the respect of the rights of the Palestinian people within a comprehensive and just solution. We are a peace-loving people. In spite of all the injustices perpetrated against us by the Israelis, we are still ready and willing to make peace.

Yet, there are some leaders in Israel who are readying themselves to show the Palestinians more Iron Fists, more Israeli settlements on confiscated lands, and more harsh practices. New approaches and methods of repression are promised and these, some Israeli leaders assure their followers, will do the trick of silencing the Palestinians.

The future does not look promising. More repression will lead to more resistance, and the cycle can become even more vicious if no international pressure is brought to bear on the Israelis. Again, the *Intifadah* is the antithesis of the occupation, and as long as the occupation continues, so will the *Intifadah*. This is no play on words; it is a conclusion one draws from living in the Occupied Territories.

But can the Palestinian people take all the sacrifices involved in this seemingly endless confrontation? The answer lies in the *Intifadah* itself: it is an ingenious, creative and multifaceted process that involves the majority of the people living under occupation. As process, the *Intifadah* is the people and is the expression of their will and determination to end the occupation. And if some Israeli leaders think that they will succeed in suppressing the *Intifadah*, or its epiphenomena, they will never be able to suppress its roots which lie within the people themselves. This is why the *Intifadah* will not go away until Israel's occupation ends. ■

Ramallah "strike force." Rick Reinhard

A State Is Born

Obstacles That Lie Ahead

Alfred Lilienthal

At exactly 1:45 am on Tuesday, November 15, 1988 in the Palais des Nations, 25 kilometers outside the Algerian capital, the state of Palestine came into being. Near hysteria reigned as PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, better known to his people as Abu Ammar, finished his passionate, 23-minute recital of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence: "In the name of God, and in the name of the Palestinian Arab people, [the PNC] hereby proclaims the establishment of the State of Palestine on our Palestinian territory with its capital Holy Jerusalem (Al-Quds Al-Sharif)."

The 60-piece band playing "Biladi" (My Homeland), the Palestinian national anthem, could scarcely be heard above the bedlam. Men and women embraced each other. Multi-colored balloons filled the air. Palestinians and their supporters from around the globe celebrated. The ululating Arab trilling added to the din which reached a crescendo when the green, black, white, and red flag of Palestine was unfurled at the rear of the hall.

This vividly brought to mind an atmosphere of equal exuberance at Long Island's Lake Success on November 29, 1947, when the United Nations voted the state of Israel into existence. Then, a rabbi cried out ecstatically, "This was the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice in it and be glad."

It had taken 41 years for the other half of United Nations Resolution 181 to be implemented—41 years of unending bloodshed and so many lives later, and more, undoubtedly, to come. Other West Bank and Gaza youths, whose insurrection had brought the Middle East to its new critical juncture, would undoubtedly pay the supreme price before independence was achieved.

Seated in the front row, facing Arafat and quietly weeping, was Um Jihad, Intezar Al-Wazir, widow of the Palestinian leader assassinated in Tunis in April. Destiny had not permitted him to enjoy the magic moment for which he had so arduously striven. She smiled bravely when Algerian Foreign Minister Bouhlem Bessrieh took the podium to become the first government to recognize the new state of Palestine.

The four-day extraordinary meeting of the Palestine National Council known as the "*Intifadah* Session," opened with Abu Ammar flourishing an olive branch and warning, "[There is] no question of giving up stones and weapons. We're ready to discuss peace for Palestine, one that includes our rights." Paraphrasing Gamal Abdel Nasser, whose son Khalid was amongst the guests present, the PLO leader said, "This nation is born to last forever and triumph."

To achieve this end, unity was essential. Once again, as so many times in the past, Arafat showed his mastery of welding divergent views into an acceptable consensus. He cajoled delegates far into the night into accepting a very new Palestinian position. The political committee, working to formulate a full political statement, labored long and wearily. The PLO refusal to accept United Nations Resolution

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242 because it only treated the Palestine question as a refugee problem while calling for recognition of all states in the region, including Israel, had long been a stumbling block to any advance toward a settlement. George Habash, chief of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and Nayif Hawetmeh, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), vehemently opposed this implicit recognition of the Israeli state. They argued: "What are we getting in return?" But the final vote of the full council showed 255 for and 46 against, with 10 abstentions. One of the two conditions set by Washington for talking to the PLO seemed to have been met.

"We refuse to yield an inch of Palestine soil," the Habash and Hawetmeh supporters had argued. But the hard-liners did not walk out. As Habash expressed it, "We preserved our right to register our opposition, but we wish to remain allies and friends." All Palestinian groups, save those tied to Syria who did not even show up for the conference, were united in support of the PNC's political statement, including a recognition of 242 as part of a broad program calling for a two-state solution. The leadership pledged itself to move quickly to form a provisional government and to negotiate the borders and status of their declared state.

Arafat made plans to address the United Nations during its discussion of the Palestine question, subject, of course, to obtaining a visa to come to the international organization's headquarters in New York City. However, opposition on many fronts was gathering strength to block his efforts and prevent recognition of the new state.

Some of the most influential newspapers in the United States, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*—long in the Zionist camp—speedily fed opposition to the new state. In its editorial, *The New York Times* assailed "the *unilateral* declaration of statehood," quoting State Department Spokesman Charles

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat addressing the Palestine National Council that was held in Algiers in November, 1988.

Redman. But according to such logic, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington ought to have consulted England's George III and asked "Is it all right?" before issuing the American Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

Bolstered by a news analysis from Algiers by correspondent Youssef M. Ibrahim, *The New York Times* charged the PLO with failing "to cross the necessary threshold." Ibrahim told this writer in Algiers that because he is an Egyptian (incidentally, married to a Jew) he had to be critical of the PLO to maintain his objectivity.

Another objection to the fruits of the historic Algiers meeting focused on the Palestinian retention of the right to resist the Israeli occupation in occupied Palestine, while rejecting all forms of terrorism. Arafat repeated his opposition to terrorist activities originally set forth in the 1985 Cairo Declaration. But Zionist forces, backed by conservative power, objected to the resolve of the Palestinian state to exercise its right to resist occupation by all means possible. Even the expression of the hope of an eventual confederation between Jordan and Palestine did little to assuage the Zionists' and their allies' prior hostility.

While the large American newspapers remained adamantly critical, media comment in Britain was far more supportive of the Algiers declaration. The *Financial Times* noted that "accepting Resolution 242 was never going to be easy for the Palestinians. . . . Explicit recognition and renunciation of violence are indeed desirable, but should be reciprocal: that would be a good principle on which a fair-minded U.S. administration could base its policy."

As Arab, Islamic, and developing countries quickly accorded recognition to the Palestinian state, the Israelis mounted a massive offensive to block further acceptance. The Turkish *chargé d'affairs* was summoned to the foreign ministry and was singularly rebuked for his country's recognition of the new state. It seemed likely that the Greek government of Andreas Papandreou, a longtime friend of the PLO, would be pressured to withhold recognition.

It is strange that the two people most responsible for the State Department's decision, aside from Secretary George Schultz, should just happen to be the State Department's legal adviser Abraham D. Sofaer, a well-known Israeli sympathizer who has had a summer residence there, and L. Paul Bremer, III, head of the State Department's counterterrorism office.

In Jerusalem, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, in an unusual briefing for diplomats from 42 countries, assailed the PNC declaration as nothing but "an artificial show of moderation that endangered Middle East peace prospects."

This Israeli viewpoint was supported to the fullest by Washington. The State Department criticized Arafat for not making a more explicit recognition of Israel and for not ruling out all types of violence, even though the PNC document had declared that Resolutions 242 of 1967, 338 of 1973, and 181 of 1947, the United Nations partition resolution which the Palestinian national body in 1968 had previously declared null and void, should be the basis of negotiations for any peaceful settlement.

At the same time, things were becoming far rougher in occupied Palestine. The imposition of a five-day curfew on the Gaza Strip and the arrest of 600 Palestinians was but a portent of far worse that could be expected from the new Shamir government with its fanatic, religious allies in the cabinet. Palestinian casualties in occupied Palestine mounted, as Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's dicta of "beat them with restraint" gave way to just "beat them badly." And ahead is the grim possibility that Ariel Sharon, with the tragic memories of his brutality in Lebanon and earlier activities dating back to Kibya and his infamous 101 strike force, might be the replacement for Rabin.

The world was really stunned with the November 23 announcement of the rejection of Arafat's request for a visa. There had been hints of this action in the State Department's earlier statement that no application for permission to come into the United States had ever been received. But it was hoped that the headquarters agreement between the United States and the United Nations would prevail over intent to bar alleged "terrorists" from entering the country. It is strange that the two people most responsible for the State Department's decision, aside from Secretary George Shultz, should just happen to be the State Department's legal adviser Abraham D. Sofaer, a well-known Israeli

sympathizer who has had a summer residence there, and L. Paul Bremer, III, head of the State Department's counterterrorism office. While many journalists and governments concluded that the PLO had renounced terrorism at its meeting in Algiers, Bremer declared, "That's nonsense. The Palestinians still claim the right to resist the Israeli occupation by any way possible."

But who indeed are the real terrorists? The world, let alone the Middle East, scarcely knew the meaning of the word "terrorism" before Menachem Begin of the Irgun, Yitzhak Shamir of the Stern Gang and Lehi, *et al.* brought it into full bloom in 1948 and succeeding years.

The two prime ministers of Israel could claim the dubious credit for blowing up the King David Hotel, the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte, the hanging of the three British sergeants at Nathanya, and the murder of 254 old men, women, and children at Deir Yassin—to mention but a few acts masterminded by these Israeli leaders. Nor could anyone have forgotten the merciless 1982 bombing and killing of innocent civilians in Lebanon, including women and children. Israeli bombs from American-built planes rained death and destruction on Beirut, its environs, and southern Lebanon—a prelude to the combined air, land, and sea invasion of that once peaceful and beautiful country. And this was under the command of then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

It is so important that when all else fails, of course, Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust remain the ultimate weapon. To the world's protest of Sharon's brutal invasion of Lebanon with the killing of thousands of innocent civilians, Menachem Begin had shouted back: "Don't you dare moralize to us when you sat by and let six million of our people die in the gas chambers!" Shamir's response to the Palestinian Declaration of Independence and acceptance of 242 (and all other United Nations relevant resolutions) was to declare, "This is a big lie! It was a specialty of the Nazis and the Communists, and now the PLO is following the same path."

What a tragedy it is that, after the Palestinians have taken such a giant step forward on a moderate path that could lead to a just settlement, it is still not Israeli rights and Palestinian wrongs or vice-versa. Rather, it is a Christian-Jewish relationship dictating U.S.-Middle East policy—a macabre triumph for Adolph Hitler. ■

The Intifadah:

A message from three generations of Palestinians

The little town of Bethlehem does not lie still any more. It tosses and turns in daily convulsions of violence. In and around the birthplace of Jesus Christ today, scores are slaughtered, hundreds are bludgeoned with clubs and steel pipes, thousands are herded into prison camps.

Those of us who have not been killed or maimed or taken captive have a message for you. We would like to explain why there will be no Merry Christmas in Christmasland this year, and how peace can return to Bethlehem. Our message is delivered in a book:

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Israel's Men Occupy Key Positions in the U.S. Government

Michael Saba

Richard Perle, the recently retired deputy assistant secretary of defense published an article in *The New York Times* praising Vice-President-elect Dan Quayle. Why was a Democrat promoting the virtues of a conservative Republican? For that matter, how was Perle, a Democrat, appointed to a high administrative position in the Republican Reagan administration? Surprisingly, these contradictions have very little to do with the interparty struggles between Democrats and Republicans. Rather, they result from pro-Israeli political schemes within the United States.

Perle was just one of many active Zionist American political appointees who greatly influenced U.S. Middle East policies through the strength of their appointive positions whether those positions were directly related to the Middle East or not.

Steven Bryen, Perle's political protégé, and until recently, deputy assistant undersecretary of defense, was another Reagan appointee whose top priority was taking care of Israel within the U.S. government. According to a recent issue of "MidEast Markets" of the *Financial Times*, Bryen was forced to resign as the Department of Defense's technology transfer czar because of improprieties in approving the transfer of key defense-related technology to Israel.

In 1978 during the Carter on the Middle East Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which was headed by Senator Richard Stone of Florida, another Democrat. Bryen informed the Israelis: "I have the Pentagon document on the bases which you are welcome to see." I reported what I overheard to the Department of Justice. This led to a two-year espionage investigation of Bryen and the loss of his job. Bryen, however, resurfaced in the Reagan administration along with his mentor, Richard Perle.

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administration, I overheard Bryen at a meeting he was conducting with Israeli defense officials. At the time, Bryen was the senior staff member

The manner in which our government treated Bryen and Perle and allowed them freely to conduct pro-Israeli activities is but one example of the way we as a nation treat Israel. The key to the success of men like Bryen and Perle is that they position themselves in powerful administrative posts and keep their pro-Israeli schemes all in the family.

Perle's wife, Leslie Barr, was appointed to a strategic position in the Department of Commerce during the Reagan years. While in that position, she helped to develop a plan to force U.S. companies to stop operating in Libya. Shoshanna Bryen, Steven's wife, succeeded him as executive director of the Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs (JINSA), a Zionist defense related think tank with tentacles reaching deeply into the U.S. Department of Defense.

Bryen's personal assistant in the Department of Defense was Barbara Ledeen, the wife of Michael Ledeen who was a consultant to the departments of State and Defense in the Iran-contra affair. Reportedly, he facilitated Israel's role in selling U.S. missiles to the Khomeini regime in Iran. Michael Ledeen and Steven Bryen were also cofounders of JINSA. Barbara Ledeen had no previous experience in the U.S. government. She came to the Department of Defense from the *Biblical Archaeology Review* where she served as assistant editor.

When Bryen left the U.S. government in late September 1988, he became part of a company called Delta Tech, a technology transfer company financed by Ron Lauder, the son of Estée Lauder, the cosmetic manufacturer. Although he had no previous government experience, Lauder was brought into the Department of Defense as a deputy assistant undersecretary. From that position, he became the U.S. ambassador to Austria during the period when the U.S. government was constantly harassing Kurt Waldheim.

Lauder retired from government service and in addition to his cosmetic company and technology transfer business interests, he recently headed the *Kristallnocht* commemoration activities in the United States. (*Kristallnocht* is German for "Crystal Night" when, in 1938, Nazis and their supporters beat Jews and vandalized Jewish homes and businesses throughout Germany. The name recalls the streets covered with smashed glass.)

All of these individuals, whether Democrat or Republican, have one thing in common: unwavering support for Israel within the U.S. government and the American political machine.

Recently Ambassador Max Kampelman, a hard-line Democrat and State Department counselor, was praised extensively by conservative Republican Senator Jesse Helms for helping the U.S. State Department negotiate the allocations of funds to build new structures in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, either of which could be used for the new U.S. embassy in Israel. Helms went on to say that it would be in America's interest if the new president would transfer the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Kampelman was also a cofounder of JINSA and on its first board of directors.

Perle, Bryen, Kampelman, and Ledeen will continue to play important roles in the coming George Bush administration in one capacity or another. It would not be too surprising if Perle went to work for Vice-President Dan Quayle. U.S.-Middle East relations are not the first matters of concern to the president or his cabinet. This allows the deputy advisors and assistant secretaries of various U.S. government departments more room to recommend and implement, often unhindered, policy decisions regarding key issues in our ties with the Middle East. ■

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The Armageddon Network can be purchased through the American Educational Trust, 1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1013, Washington, DC 20009, (800) 368-5788.

Palestinian Statehood

The Four American Referendums

Kate B. Rouhana

The presidential candidates were not the only ones in the United States being put to a vote on November 8: Palestinian statehood, for the first time, was submitted to popular vote in four local referendums on the East and West Coasts. While only one of those resolutions passed, proponents of the four separate initiatives agree that the campaigns opened up debates where previously there had been none.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

The biggest initiative was in San Francisco, where Proposition W was billed as a Palestinian-Jewish initiative under the slogan "Win-Win." It asked voters whether American policy should include recognition of the Palestinian people's rights to statehood alongside Israel, with safety and security for both. "Prop W" won 32 percent of the 230,000 votes cast, or roughly 73,000 votes. Out of 26 referendums, Prop W ranked third or fourth in number of votes cast, an indication that the issue was meaningful to voters. To Fuad Mogannem, a Palestinian American, president of the Arab Cultural Center in San Francisco, and one of the campaign organizers, this was extremely gratifying. "Initially, we didn't even think we could put it on the ballot at all," he said. "When we tried to go to the California Democratic Central Committee to put the issue on the agenda at the State Convention, they wouldn't even consider it."

About $80,000 was spent on the campaign, and almost 10 times that amount was spent to defeat Prop W. State politicians—Alan Cranston, Pete Wilson, and John Burton, to name a few—came out vehemently against the bill. Organizers feel that the coalition building and grass-roots outreach was of enormous and lasting importance. The referendum drew endorsements from, among others, the National Council of Churches, the Northern California Ecumenical Council, the Mexican American Political Association, the Philippino American Club, the Roots Democratic Club, and the Black Pastors Association.

Moreover, hitherto apolitical Palestinian Americans rallied around the vote. "This was the first time we saw Palestinians working in politics," said Fuad Mogannem. "The businesspeople were always taught to stay out of politics because they make bad business. This time, we had hundreds of grocers and businesspeople all over the city putting signs in their windows and passing leaflets to their customers. Now that we've done this, there's no way we'll stop. Regardless of whether we have a Palestinian state or not, we must work within the system here."

The campaign also sent shock waves through the Jewish community. According to Naomi Nim, a New Jewish Agenda member who was on Prop W's organizing committee, "The referendum divided the community, but that's probably a good thing. It caused a lot of soul-searching. Our biggest achievement was opening up the debate—breaking the silence. People had to deal with the issue, they couldn't ignore it anymore."

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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Coalition for Palestinian Rights put Question 5 on the ballot by collecting 1,200 signatures last May, more than twice as many as required by law. The coalition was formed in December 1987, about 10 days after the *Intifadah* began. It consists of a number of local chapters of national groups, including the Palestine Solidarity Committee, the Palestine Aid Society, the Arab American Institute, the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, the Boston Peace Council, the Community Church of Boston, and Mobilization for Survival.

Cambridge held the only referendum to actually win a majority: 53 percent of the total 43,240 votes cast.

In addition to calling on elected officials to favor the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with peace for all the states in the region, including Israel, the Cambridge referendum was the only one to call for a halt to funding for the occupation and to criticize Israel for human rights abuses. These last two points drew bitter criticism from local politicians such as Joe Kennedy and Barney Frank, who uniformly denounced the referendum. The two co-chaired the opposition group called Americans for Peace in the Middle East. In a statement sent to all Cambridge homes before the vote, Frank warned: "Propagandists for Syria, Iraq, [and] Shiite fundamentalists in Lebanon and elsewhere will seize on the passage of this referendum as a criticism of Israel, unaccompanied by any critical statement about the positions of any Arab country."

Yet despite the heavyweight opposition, the Cambridge question passed. The total campaign budget was only about $15,000. According to Katherine Silver, a member of the coalition, this might have been because of its different message. "One thing we were very successful in was putting across the point that we are paying for the violence we see on our TV screens every night," she said. "We believe—and now that belief is reinforced—that this is what links average Americans to this issue: that their tax money is paying for it, lock, stock, and barrel."

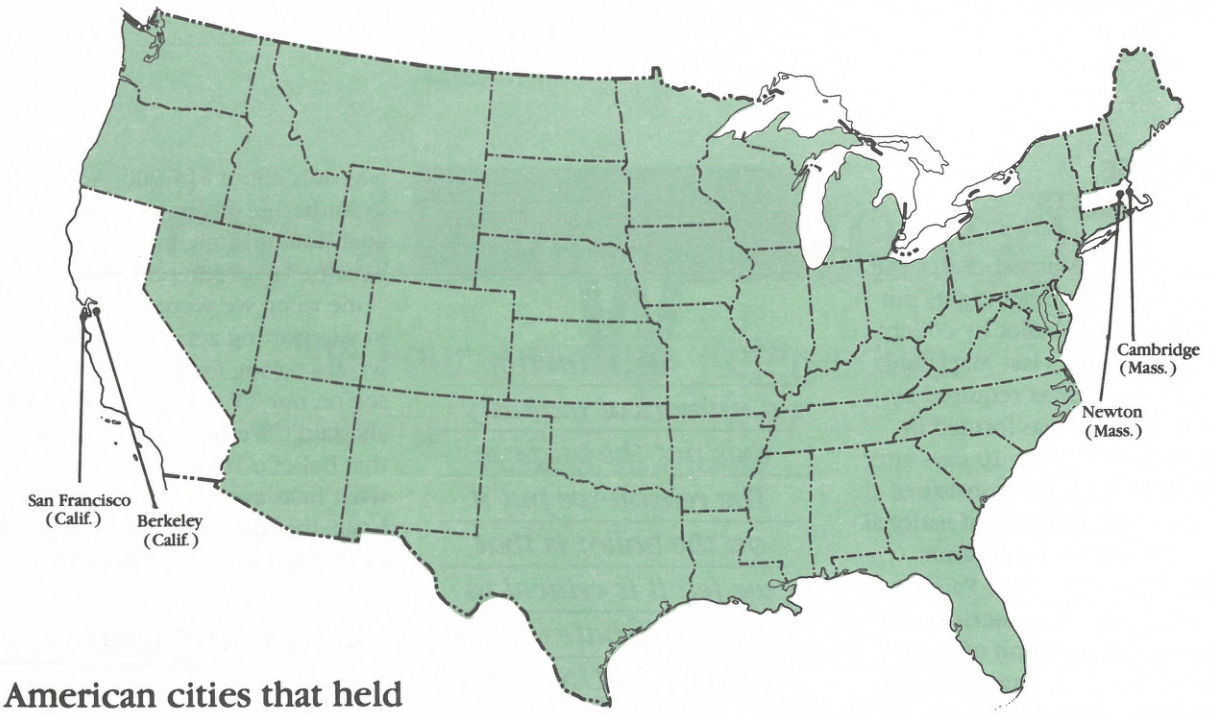
> *"Winning a numerical majority was not the purpose. The reason we put it on the ballot is that we felt it is critical to open up debate on the question of U.S. policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict among Amerians and American Jews. As half of the population of Newton is Jewish, I thought it was important."*
>
> *—Andrea Barron*

NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The other two initiatives were much smaller and even more local. In Newton, Massachusetts, a group called the Newton Committee for Israeli Palestinian Peace put a question on the ballot in two districts of the city with a large Jewish population. The resolution asked voters whether representatives should be instructed to favor "the principle of self-determination for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip next to Israel, and security for Israel and the Palestinian state."

The Newton referendum was defeated, but Andrea Barron, founder of the group and the prime mover behind the initiative, found the 32 percent of votes it received to be encouraging.

Said Barron, "Winning a numerical majority was not the purpose. The reason we put it on the ballot is that we felt it is critical to open up debate on the question of U.S. policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict among Americans and American Jews. As half of the population of Newton is Jewish, I thought it was important," Yet, she asserts, she acted without knowledge of the parallel effort in neighboring Cambridge: I had *absolutely* no idea that there were



American cities that held referendums regarding Palestinian statehood.

While there are 200 American towns that have sister city links with Israeli towns, there are no such links with Palestinian localities.

three other initiatives. I think the reason they came at the same time is that those Americans who support the creation of a Palestinian homeland next to Israel feel very frustrated that there has been no movement on the part of American officials.

"As American Jews who support Palestinian statehood," she added, "we have [the] right and a responsibility to influence our leaders. The polls indicate that there are a considerable number of people in the United States today who are willing to support a state. The leaders are not going to lead anyway: this is a case where people need to lead. The Newton initiative, while small-scale, was a beginning."

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

And in Berkeley, California, a group called Friends of Jabaliya put "Measure J" on the ballot, asking city residents to adopt Jabaliya refugee camp as a sister city. Berkeley already has sister city ties with towns in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and South Africa, but the refugee camp will not be added to the list. Measure J lost, 71 percent to 29 percent. Despite some support from the progressive Jewish community in Berkeley, the measure faced very heavy opposition which, according to one organizer, had 40 times the financial resources to sway voters' minds. While there are 200 American towns that have sister city links with Israeli towns, there are no such links with Palestinian localities.

Despite the fact that only the Cambridge measure passed, the four referendums offer an important indication that grassroots support for Palestinian statehood is growing. "This is the first time we've had a very concrete indication that public opinion is changing and that it is possible to have a strongly worded statement in favor of Palestinian rights," said Silver. "While Cambridge is not the entire U.S., it is an indication."

Abdeen Jabara, president of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said that the fact that

*See **STATEHOOD**, page 39*

The History of Palestine

Gender, Politics, and Colonial Relations in the Work of Soraya Antonius

Suha Sabbagh

Soraya Antonius is a new literary star on the horizon. She was born in Jerusalem before 1948. Her father was George Antonius, a well-known Arab historian and the author of *The Arab Awakening*. Her mother, Katie, dedicated most of her later years to caring for an orphanage in Jerusalem.

Antonius is well qualified to write about the history, the politics, and the geography of Palestine, particularly the Jerusalem area. Her accurate conveyance of historical developments is matched by an equally skillful style that captures the colors, smells, and textures of the Palestinian countryside. Antonius writes in the same way an Impressionist painter paints. She evokes rather than explicitly describes scenes from Palestinian villages that have long since disappeared.

Antonius is an excellent social historian, accurately detailing the everyday aspects of peasant life. For example, she describes the preparation of *al-muni*, the winter provisions of grains, onions, oil, and other supplies indispensable to households in the days before supermarkets. In another example of her detailed chronicling of peasant life, Antonius describes the practical peasant-style sleeping accommodations. Traditionally, Levantines used a *lahaf* (a thin cotton quilt) that doubled as both mattress and cover, and could be rolled up and placed in the *youk* (wall closet), providing for more space in the daytime. Antonius even gives a detailed description of all the objects constituting most peasant dowries, including the contents of the *Sini* (Chinese) cupboard, porcelain imports from China that no household could do without.

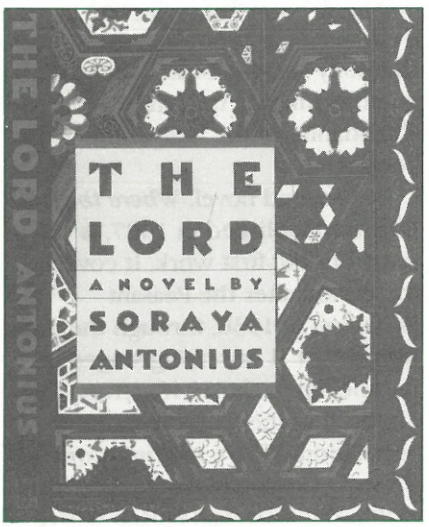
Through her unique historical perspective, through her detailed description of Palestinian life before 1948, through her breathtaking images of the traditional Palestinian countryside, Antonius, on one level, reverses the historical process that buried Palestine. Within the pages of her two novels, Antonius resurrects the Palestinian villages that history has forgotten.

Antonius published two historical novels that span the history of Palestine from the beginning of the British Mandate in 1918, through the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Her first novel, *The Lord*, published in 1986, deals with the emergence of Arab nationalism in response to the growing Zionist movement in British-Mandated Palestine. The plot focuses on the protagonist, Tareq, a popular local magician and an Arab rebel, hung by the British on the Muslim Feast of Sacrifice. A parallel is drawn between Tareq and Jesus exposing the irony and the brutality of the colonial mission to bring Christianity to the indigenous population.

Her second novel, *Where the Jinn Consult*, published in 1987, is a sequel to the first work. It covers the period after the Peasant Rebellion of 1936, through the time World War II was being waged in Europe, up to the 1948 defeat, and dispersal of the Palestinian population. *Where the Jinn Consult* is the name given to a courtyard within the a Turkish palace where the sultan secretly plotted the

Suha Sabbagh holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Currently, she is researching and writing about the role of women in Palestinian literature.

No one would argue that Soraya Antonius set out to write a feminist work when she wrote her two historical novels. However, her work has a distinctly feminine point of view.



assassination of members of the royal family who could in the future threaten his throne. A symbolic reference is made here to the plots hatched by the British and the Zionists against the people of Palestine, and to the murders committed by the extremist Zionist terror organizations, the Hagana and the Irgun. The narrative explores the effect these plots had on the lives of Jerusalem natives.

The events which take place in *The Lord* are told mainly from the third-person British perspective of Miss Alice. The quintessential British missionary, Miss Alice arrived in Jaffa at the age of 17, "long before there was any construction that would merit calling Jaffa a port." When Miss Alice was approaching 70, "after Jaffa had long since disappeared," she was interviewed in England by a young woman about the events that led to Tareq's hanging. Tareq had been her favorite student and a special relation had developed between them. Miss Alice was not an average missionary. She overcame many of the prejudices that her colleagues harbored toward the Palestinian people, yet, in spite of the strong ties formed between her and Tareq's mother, she was incapable of supporting the grievances of the local population against the Mandate. In retrospect, she is willing to concede that the British had lied by making two conflicting promises regarding the future of Palestine. However, she did very little to prevent the suffering of the indigenous population at the hands of the British authorities. While Miss Alice could empathize with the local population, her unwaivering loyalty to Britain often overshadowed her empathy.

Tareq graduates from the missionary school where he acquires English fluency to become a popular magician. In addition to magic, his act reveals the truth about the nature of the British occupation to his audiences. In his grand finale, Tareq turns an English-style hat into a *kaffiyeh*, the symbolism of which does not escape British officials. The *Inglizeh* also fail to be amused, when, on a different occasion, the magician makes the high commissioner's clothes momentarily disappear. Showing the high commissioner naked disrespectfully alludes to revealing the naked truth about the British intentions in Palestine.

A certain parallel is drawn between the life of Tareq, the witty conjurer of truth, and the life of Jesus, the Christian embodiment of truth and human dignity. The present is linked with the past through the suffering of the people of Palestine at the hands of conquerors. But the novel derives its title, *The Lord*, from the characteristic irony of the colonial encounter. Colonization was sanctioned in the name of bringing Christianity to the Palestinian people. Yet, the British hung Tareq in the same way the Romans crucified Jesus before him. He is hung on the Muslim Feast of Sacrifice, when a sheep is slaughtered in commemoration of Abraham's older son Isaac, who escaped the same fate.

Within the plot, Antonius states that, in the colonial context, European women had a greater degree of empathy with the Palestinians than men. But, this gender-based empathy could not transcend the exploitive nature of colonial relations. The ties that develop between Tareq's mother and Miss Alice build on their common experiences in running households. Their relationship is based on shared experiences with their traditional roles as women.

During the period of the conflict between the British and the

Palestinians, however, Miss Alice was incapable of abandoning the official British position toward the indigenous population. The narrative also pits the occupiers and the occupied against one another showing that no friendship based exclusively on personal relations, no matter how sincere, can withstand the historical currents which will one day lead the two to confrontation.

Tareq's story becomes a subplot in the second novel. The work deals mainly with the life of the financially secure strata of society in Jerusalem, before the fatal year approached. It deals with the impact of historical developments on people's lives: how the Balfour Declaration and other foreign decrees affected local Palestinian families. If the local population is faulted in the loss of Palestine, it is for feeling too secure in the face of events to come. The author explains the bases for this false sense of security in a number of ways. The peasants, for example, felt secure because they could not believe that the land could be usurped. The land "can't be killed, like a sheep. It can't be driven into the desert, like a camel. And not even the *Inglizeh* can put it in their suitcases and sail away."

No one would argue that Soraya Antonius set out to write a feminist work when she wrote her two historical novels. However, her work has a distinctly feminine point of view. This is evident, for example, in her detailed description of peasant life described above; or in the way in which Violet Dhaishi, the Jerusalem socialite and central character of the second novel, sets her table for one of many dinner parties attended by Arab notables and British officials. The female perspective is also evident throughout the plot where Antonius forces a discussion of gender relations and their effect on Palestinian history.

The gentry, like Ragheb Bey, mayor of Jerusalem, were secure in their social and economic standing, and they were confident in the power that they, mostly men, exercised over women. And Antonius points out that traditional patriarchal relations were largely responsible for contributing to a false sense of security in Palestinian society before 1948.

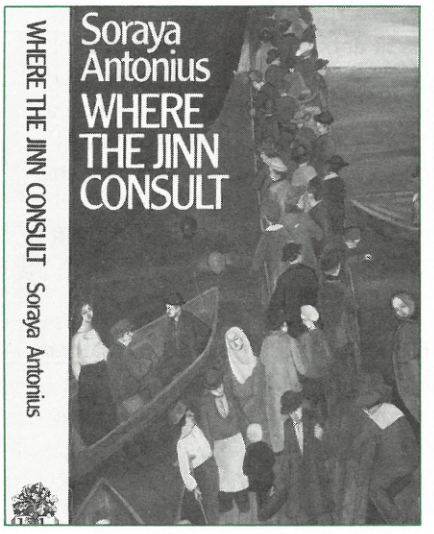
In a passage describing the interaction between a British journalist and Mayor Bey over what will happen should Zionist immigration into Palestine be allowed to continue, the mayor adds water to a glass that is already full saying that, the laws of physics will cause one of two things to happen: either the container will burst or the newly added water will spill over. The journalist proposes a third alternative that the mayor had failed to consider, "if the new water is poured in fast enough . . . the original contents would be displaced."

"A woman, eyes to the ground not to disturb the rulers of the world, comes in to sponge the water" without either man noticing her. The scene suggests that the inability of the mayor to recognize and identify that third possibility rested on the fact that he felt too secure to be displaced.

The author's views on the problems facing women in rural Palestinian society are expressed through the life of Buthaina, a childless peasant woman who seeks the help of the magician, Tareq, in overcoming her problems. Antonius conducts her critical assessment of the role of women with the utmost sensitivity from a contemporary point within the culture, as opposed to imposing present-day Western values. Buthaina's beauty and strength of character win over her father's heart, he expresses his love by marrying her to a much older but wealthy widower, Abu Ramzi.

*See **PALESTINE**, page 31*

Antonius conducts her critical assessment of the role of women with the utmost sensitivity from a contemporary point within the culture, as opposed to imposing present-day Western values.



News In Brief

SOUTH AFRICAN ADVISORS ON WEST BANK

In late September, near Al-Amari refugee camp outside of Ramallah, high-ranking South African military officers were seen accompanying Israeli army officers. The Israeli military has been supplying South Africa with counterinsurgency training for a long time. It is generally believed that the South Africans were observing Israeli tactics in combatting the *Intifadah*. However, according to Tony Marlowe, a member of the British Parliament who was visiting the Occupied Territories at about the same time, the South Africans were advising Israeli units. Both Israel and South Africa refused to either confirm or deny the presence of the South Africans.

THE EEC APPROVES ACCORD WITH ISRAEL

On October 12, the European Economic Community's Parliament approved trade accords that will gradually reduce to zero tariffs on most vegetables and cut flowers Israel sells to the 12 EEC member nations. The approval came after a year-long series of rebuffs, in which European governments expressed disapproval of the Iron Fist policy Israel is using against the *Intifadah*. The final approval was conditioned on Israel's promise to permit Palestinian farmers in the West Bank and Gaza to export their produce directly to Europe. While shipments of grapefruit from Gaza have already begun, there is some anxiety that, as Israel has now obtained the concessions it wanted from the EEC, there is little to prevent it from blocking or sabotaging future Palestinian exports.

ISRAEL SELLS CHILE KFIR JETS

Israel has struck a deal to deliver 12 Kfir fighter-bomber aircraft to Chile. According to *Jane's Defence Weekly* and the *Financial Times* of London, Israel will circumvent the U.S. embargo of arms sales to the military dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet by delivering the aircraft with an Atar 9K-50 engine rather than the General Electric engine that powers its own Kfirs. The sale of the General Electric engines to third countries is subject to U.S. approval. But Israel produces the Atar jointly with South Africa.

Israel is believed to have stolen the plans for the Atar engine from a Swiss company licensed to produce the French Mirage III in the late sixties and then to have sold them to South Africa. The Atar engine powers South Africa's fighter aircraft, the Cheetah.

U.S. AID INCREASES FUNDS TO ISRAEL

A special U.S. Agency for International Development program that funds Israeli "development" activities in the developing world has been increased from $5 million to $7 million for the coming year. The program was conceived as a way of improving Israel's standing with countries that have refused to grant it diplomatic recognition. But it is known to have been used for intelligence gathering and other purposes. In 1986, some of this AID money was spent to fund programs in Honduras and Costa Rica—both of which have close relations with Israel—in locations used as staging areas by the anti-Nicaragua contras. Israel began providing arms and training for the contras in 1982.

ABDUL QADER DETAINED

On September 4, the Israeli military authorities detained Hatem Abdul Qader, the managing editor of *Al-Fajr* newspaper in Jerusalem.

Abdul Qader wrote an article for *The Return* that was published in its September issue. In the article, Abdul Qader described his ordeal while he was in jail. He was arrested on May 2, and released on June 4 because it was established that he had been illegally served with a six-month administrative detention order.

As though to get even with Abdul Qader for successfully challenging his initial order of arrest, the occupation authorities are currently holding him in solitary confinement in the Beersheba prison. He is the only administrative detainee among the prison's inmates. His cell is humid and infested with rodents. He is not permitted to talk to other prisoners, nor is he permitted to leave his cell.

Abdul Qader's family has appealed to the international community to intervene on his behalf.

PLO DELEGATION VISITS JAPAN

A high-level PLO delegation headed by Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO Political Department, paid a visit to Japan between November 6 and 9. The delegation was invited by the Parliamentary League for Palestinian-Japanese Friendship.

During the visit, the delegation met with the Japanese prime minister and his foreign minister. The discussions between the two sides centered on Japan's readiness to play a more active role in support of the Palestinian cause.

The Palestinian delegation brought up the issue of future financial aid for the new Palestinian state. Other items that were discussed include the possibility of a Japanese role as an intermediary between the United States and the PLO.

Mr. Kaddoumi requested that the PLO office in Tokyo be upgraded. Japan's response was that the request would be evaluated based upon the results of the Algiers meeting of the Palestine National Council.

RAYMONDA TAWIL IS BACK IN JERUSALEM

Mrs. Raymonda Tawil, owner of the Jerusalem-based Palestine Press Service and publisher of *The Return*, has just returned to Jerusalem after an absence of almost a year.

The offices of the Palestine Press Service in Jerusalem were ordered shut for a six-month period in May. The closure order was then extended for another six-month period. ■

***PALESTINE**, from page 29*

From within the cultural context, her father's decision is based on the priority of maximizing the material welfare of his daughter.

Although the marriage does not seem to involve Buthaina's feelings, she is happy with the degree of autonomy that she exercises in the home. But the security which her father sought for her was not to be. Her life is shattered mainly at the hands of the British occupation authorities. First, when British soldiers search and turn her house into rubble. And second, in an effort to discredit the nationalist rebel, Tareq, the British circulated a rumor of a sexual relationship between Tareq and Buthaina. As a result, Abu Ramzi repudiates Buthaina and marries again. Buthaina must now seek employment as a maid to sustain herself and her son and her experiences are recounted in *Where the Jinn Consult*, the sequel to the first novel.

However, Antonius concludes that women suffer more from colonization than they do from sexism. From Buthaina's point of view, her life with her husband was cohesive if not equal. She understood her role and the internal logic that held the social structure. The far more formidable enemy for Buthaina is colonialism. The external forces are what manage to destroy Buthaina's small comforts.

In the second novel Buthaina becomes the maid of Mrs. Al-Ghal whose husband was kidnapped by the British occupation authorities. And together, the two women form a support system for one another, albeit, not based on equality. But Buthaina achieves her objective of educating her son who soon shows every indication of becoming a future rebel, much like Tareq.

As a first novel, *The Lord* has some technical problems—the plot sometimes meanders. But, Antonius' thorough rendering of life in Palestinian villages is so believable that it makes reading this book a most rewarding experience. The second novel overcomes the problems inherent in the first work. Here the plot lends the work a great sense of cohesiveness and control. Where the author seemed somewhat removed and dispassionate in the first work, no doubt because of the historical distance, here the narrative is propelled forward by a sense of outrage against the injustice done to the Palestinian people. Both novels are must reading for anyone interested in the social history of Palestine during the British Mandate. It is to be hoped that the author will continue to expose readers to this human side to the Palestine conflict. ■

FOR THE RECORD

The Palestinian Declaration of Independence

(Official English Translation)

Palestine, the Land of the three monotheistic faiths, is where the Palestinian Arab people was born, on which it grew, developed and excelled. The Palestinian people was never separated from or diminished in its integral bonds with Palestine. Thus the Palestinian Arab people ensured for itself an everlasting union between itself, its Land and its history.

Resolute throughout that history, the Palestinian Arab people forged its national identity, rising even to unimagined levels in its defense, as invasion, the design of others, and the appeal special to Palestine's ancient and luminous place on that eminence where powers and civilizations are joined. . . . All this intervened thereby to deprive the people of its political independence. Yet the undying connection between Palestine and its people secured for the Land its character, and for the people its national genius.

Nourished by an unfolding series of civilizations and cultures, inspired by a heritage rich in variety and kind, the Palestinian Arab people added to its stature by consolidating a union between itself and its patrimonial Land. The call went out from Temple, Church and Mosque that to praise the Creator, to celebrate compassion and peace was indeed the message of Palestine. And in generation after generation, the Palestinian Arab people gave of itself unsparingly in the valiant battle for liberation and homeland. For what has been the unbroken chain of our people's rebellions but the heroic embodiment of our will for national independence? And so the people was sustained in the struggle to stay and to prevail.

When in the course of modern times a new order of values was declared with norms and values fair for all, it was the Palestinian Arab people that had been excluded from the destiny of all other peoples by a hostile array of local and foreign powers. Yet again had unaided justice been revealed as insufficient to drive the world's history along its preferred course.

And it was the Palestinian people, already wounded in its body, that was submitted to yet another type of occupation over which floated the falsehood that "Palestine was a land without people." This notion was foisted upon some in the world, whereas in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations (1919) and in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), the community of nations had recognized that all the Arab territories, including Palestine, of the formerly Ottoman provinces, were to have granted to them their freedom as provisionally independent nations.

Despite the historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinian Arab people resulting in their dispersion and depriving them of their right to self-determination, following upon U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181 (1947), which partitioned Palestine into two states, one Arab, one Jewish, yet it is this Resolution that still provides those conditions of international legitimacy that ensure the right of the Palestinian Arab people to sovereignty.

By stages, the occupation of Palestine and parts of other Arab territories by Israeli forces, the willed dispossession and expulsion from their ancestral homes of the majority of Palestine's civilian

inhabitants, was achieved by organized terror; those Palestinians who remained, as a vestige subjugated in its homeland, were persecuted and forced to endure the destruction of their national life.

Thus were principles of international legitimacy violated. Thus were the Charter of the United Nations and its Resolutions disfigured, for they had recognized the Palestinian Arab people's national rights, including the right of Return, the right to independence, the right to sovereignty over territory and homeland.

In Palestine and on its perimeters, in exile distant and near, the Palestinian Arab people never faltered and never abandoned its conviction in its rights of Return and independence. Occupation, massacres and dispersion achieved no gain in the unabated Palestinian consciousness of self and political identity, as Palestinians went forward with their destiny, undeterred and unbowed. And from out of the long years of trial in evermounting struggle, the Palestinian political identity emerged further consolidated and confirmed. And the collective Palestinian national will forged for itself a political embodiment, the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole, legitimate representative recognized by the world community as a whole, as well as by related regional and international institutions. Standing on the very rock of conviction in the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, and on the ground of Arab national consensus and of international legitimacy, the PLO led the campaigns of its great people, molded into unity and powerful resolve, one and indivisible in its triumphs, even as it suffered massacres and confinement within and without its home. And so Palestinian resistance was clarified and raised into the forefront of Arab and world awareness, as the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people achieved unique prominence among the world's liberation movements in the modern era.

The Palestine National Council, in the name of the Palestinian Arab people, hereby proclaims the establishment of the State of Palestine on our Palestinian territory with its capital Holy Jerusalem (Al-Quds Ash-Sharif).

The massive national uprising, the *intifada*, now intensifying in cumulative scope and power on occupied Palestinian territories, as well as the unflinching resistance of the refugee camps outside the homeland, have elevated awareness of the Palestinian truth and right into still higher realms of comprehension and actuality. Now at last the curtain has been dropped around a whole epoch of prevarication and negation. The *intifada* has set siege to the mind of official Israel, which has for too long relied exclusively upon myth and terror to deny Palestinian existence altogether. Because of the *intifada* and its revolutionary irreversible impulse, the history of Palestine has therefore arrived at a decisive juncture.

Whereas the Palestinian people reaffirms most definitively its inalienable rights in the Land of its patrimony:

> Now by virtue of natural, historical and legal rights, and the sacrifices of successive generations who gave of themselves in defense of the freedom and independence of their homeland;
>
> In pursuance of Resolutions adopted by Arab Summit Conferences and relying on the authority bestowed by international legitimacy as embodied in the Resolution of the United Nations Organization since 1947;
> And in exercise by the Palestinian Arab people of its rights to self-determination, political independence and sovereignty over its territory;
> The Palestine National Council, in the name of God, and in the name of the Palestinian Arab people, hereby proclaims the establishment of the State of Palestine on our Palestinian territory with its capital Holy Jerusalem (Al-Quds Ash-Sharif).

The State of Palestine is the state of Palestinians wherever they may be. The state is for them to enjoy in it their collective national and cultural identity, theirs to pursue in it a complete equality of rights. In it will be safeguarded their political and religious convictions and their human dignity by means of a parlia-

mentary democratic system of governance, itself based on freedom of expression and the freedom to form parties. The rights of minorities will duly be respected by the majority, as minorities must abide by decisions of the majority. Governance will be based on principles of social justice, equality and non-discrimination in public rights of men or women, on grounds of race, religion, color or sex, under the aegis of a constitution which ensures the rule of law and an independent judiciary. Thus shall these principles allow no departure from Palestine's age-old spiritual and civilizational heritage of tolerance and religious coexistence.

The State of Palestine is an Arab state, an integral and indivisible part of the Arab nation, at one with that nation in heritage and civilization, with it also in its aspiration for liberation, progress, democracy and unity. The State of Palestine affirms its obligation to abide by the Charter of the League of Arab States, whereby the coordination of the Arab states with each other shall be strengthened. It calls upon Arab compatriots to consolidate and enhance the emergence in reality of our state, to mobilize potential, and to intensify efforts whose goal is to end Israeli occupation.

The State of Palestine proclaims its commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations, and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It proclaims its commitment as well to the principles and policies of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It further announces itself to be a peace-loving State, in adherence to the principles of peaceful coexistence. It will join with all states and peoples in order to assure a permanent peace based upon justice and the respect of rights so that humanity's potential for well-being may be assured, an earnest competition for excellence may be maintained, and in which confidence in the future will eliminate fear for those who are just and for whom justice is the only recourse.

In the context of its struggle for peace in the Land of Love and Peace, the State of Palestine calls upon the United Nations to bear special responsibility for the Palestinian Arab people and its homeland. It calls upon all peace- and freedom-loving peoples and states to assist it in the attainment of its objectives, to provide it with security, to alleviate the tragedy of its people, and to help it terminate Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The State of Palestine herewith declares that it believes in the settlement of regional and international disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with the U.N. Charter and resolutions. Without prejudice to its natural right to defend its territorial integrity and independence, it therefore rejects the threat or use of force, violence and terrorism against its territorial integrity or political independence, as it also rejects their use against the territorial integrity of other states.

Therefore, on this day unlike all others, November 15, 1988, as we stand at the threshold of a new dawn, in all honor and modesty we humbly bow to the sacred spirits of our fallen ones, Palestinian and Arab, by the purity of whose sacrifice for the homeland our sky has been illuminated and our Land given life. Our hearts are lifted up and irradiated by the light emanating from the much blessed *intifada*, from those who have endured and have fought the fight of the camps, of dispersion, of exile, from those who have borne the standard for freedom, our children, our aged, our youth, our prisoners, detainees and wounded, all those whose ties to our sacred soil are confirmed in camp, village and town. We render special tribute to that brave Palestinian Woman, guardian of sustenance and Life, Keeper of our people's perennial flame. To the souls of our sainted martyrs, to the whole of our Palestinian Arab people, to all free and honorable peoples everywhere, we pledge that our struggle shall be continued until the occupation ends, and the foundation of our sovereignty and independence shall be fortified accordingly.

Therefore, we call upon our great people to rally to the banner of Palestine, to cherish and defend it, so that it may forever be the symbol of our freedom and dignity in that homeland, which is a homeland for the free, now and always.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful:

Say:

"O God, Master of the Kingdom,
Thou givest the Kingdom to whom Thou wilt,
and seizest the Kingdom from whom Thou wilt,
Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt;
in Thy hand is the good;
Thou art powerful over everything."

Political Statement

Adopted By The Palestine National Council At The Conclusion Of Its Meeting Held In Algiers November 11-15, 1988

(Official English Translation)

In the valiant land of Algeria, hosted by its people and its president, Chedli Benjedid, the Palestine National Council held its nineteenth extraordinary session—the session of the *intifada* and independence, the session of the martyred hero Abu Jihad—in the period between the 12th and the 15th of November, 1988.

This session culminated in the announcement of the rise of the Palestinian state in our Palestinian land, the natural climax of a daring and tenacious popular struggle that started more than seventy years ago and was baptized in the immense sacrifices offered by our people in our homeland, along its borders, and in the camps and other sites of our diaspora.

The session was also distinguished by its focus on the great national Palestinian *intifada* as one of the major milestones in the contemporary history of the Palestinian people's revolution, on a par with the legendary steadfastness of our people in their camps in our occupied land and outside it.

The primary features of our great people's *intifada* were obvious from its inception and have become clearer in the twelve months since then during which it has continued unabated: It is a total popular revolution that embodies the consensus of an entire nation—women and men, old and young, in the camps, in the villages and the cities—on the rejection of the occupation and on the determination to struggle until the occupation is defeated and terminated.

This glorious *intifada* has demonstrated our people's deeply rooted national unity and their full adherence to the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of our people, all our people, wherever they congregate—in our homeland or outside it. This was manifested by the participation of the Palestinian masses—their unions, their vocational organizations, their students, their workers, their farmers, their women, their merchants, their landlords, their artisans, their academics—in the *intifada* through its Unified National Command and the Popular Committees that were formed in the urban neighborhoods, the villages and the camps.

This, our people's revolutionary furnace and their blessed *intifada*, along with the

Attendees at the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers.

cumulative impact of our innovative and continuous revolution inside and outside of our homeland, have destroyed the illusion our people's enemies have harbored that they can turn the occupation of Palestinian land into a permanent *fait accompli* and consign the Palestinian issue to oblivion. For our generations have been weaned on the goals and principles of the Palestinian revolution and have lived all its battles since its birth in 1965—including the heroic resistance to the Zionist invasion of 1982 and the steadfastness of the revolution's camps as they endured the siege and starvation in Lebanon. Those generations—the children of the revolution and of the Palestine Liberation Organization—rose to demonstrate the dynamism and continuity of the revolution, detonating the land under the feet of its occupiers and proving that our people's reserves of resistance are inexhaustible and their faith is too deep to uproot.

Thus did the struggle of the children of the RPG's outside our homeland and the struggle of the children of the sacred stones inside it blend into a single revolutionary melody.

Our people have stood fast against all the attempts of our enemy's authorities to end our revolution, and those authorities have tried everything at their disposal: they have used terrorism, they have imprisoned us, they have sent us into exile, they have desecrated our holy places and restricted our religious freedoms, they have demolished our homes, they have killed us indiscriminately, and premeditatedly, they have sent bands of armed settlers into our villages and camps, they have burned our crops, they have cut off our water and power supplies, they have beaten our women and children, they have used toxic gases that have caused many deaths and abortions, and they have waged an ignorance war against us by closing our schools and universities.

Our people's heroic steadfastness has cost them hundreds of martyrs and tens of thousands of casualties, prisoners, and exiles. But our people's genius was always at hand, ready in their darkest hours to innovate the means and formulas of struggle, which stiffened their resistance, bolstered their steadfastness and enabled them to confront the crimes and measures of the enemy and carry on with their heroic, tenacious struggle.

By standing firm, continuing their revolution and escalating their *intifada*, our people have proved their determination to press ahead regardless of the sacrifices, armed with the great heritage of struggle, an indomitable revolutionary will, a deeply entrenched national unity that has been rendered even stronger by the *intifada* and its attendant struggles inside and outside our homeland, and total adherence to the nationalistic principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its goals of ending the Israeli occupation and achieving the Palestinian people's inalienable right to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of the independent Palestinian state.

In all this, our people relied on the sustenance of the masses and forces of our Arab nation, which have stood by us and backed us, as demonstrated by the wide popular support for the *intifada* and by the consensus and resolutions that emerged at the Arab summit in Algiers—all of which goes to confirm that our people do not stand alone as they face the fascist, racist assault, and this precludes any possibility of the Israeli aggressors isolating our people and cutting them off from the support of their Arab nation.

In addition to this Arab solidarity, our people's revolution and their blessed *intifada* have attracted widespread worldwide solidarity, as seen in the increased understanding of the Palestinian people's issue, the growing support of our just struggle by the peoples and states of the world, and the corresponding condemnation of Israeli occupation and the crimes it is committing, which has helped to expose Israel and increase its isolation and the isolation of its supporters.

Security Council Resolutions 605, 607 and 608 and the resolutions of the General Assembly against the expulsion of the Palestinians from their land and against the repression and terrorism with which Israel is lashing the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories—these are strong manifestations of the growing support of international opinion, public and official, for our people and their representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and of the mounting international rejection of Israeli occupation with all the fascist, racist practices it entails.

The U.N. General Assembly's Resolution 21L/43/1 of 3/11/88, which was adopted in the session dedicated to the *intifada*, is another sign of the stand the peoples and states of the world in their majority are taking against the occupation and with the just struggle of the Palestinian people and their firm right to liberation and independence. The crimes of the occupation and its savage, inhuman practices have exposed the Zionist lie about the democracy of the Zionist entity that has managed to deceive the world for forty years, revealing Israel in its true light—a fascist, racist, colonialist state built on the usurpation of the Palestinian land and the annihilation of the Palestinian people, a state that threatens and undertakes attacks and expansion into neighboring Arab lands.

It has thus been demonstrated that the occupation cannot continue to reap the fruits of its actions at the expense of the Palestinian people's rights without paying a price—either on the ground or in terms of international public opinion.

In addition to the rejection of the occupation and the condemnation of its repressive measures by the democratic and progressive Israeli forces, Jewish groups all over the world are no longer able to continue their defense of Israel or maintain their silence about its crimes against the Palestinian people. Many voices have risen among those groups to demand an end to these crimes and call for Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories in order to allow the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination.

The fruits that our people's revolution and their blessed *intifada* have borne on the local, Arab, and international levels have established the soundness and realism of the Palestine Liberation Organization's national program, a program aimed at the termination of the occupation and the achievement of our people's right to return, self-determination, and statehood. Those results have also confirmed that the struggle of our people is the decisive factor in the effort to snatch our national rights from the jaws of the occupation. It is the authority of our people, as represented in the Popular Committees, that controls the situation as we challenge the authority of the occupation's crumbling agencies.

The international community is now more prepared than ever before to strive for a political settlement of the Middle East crisis and its root cause, the question of Palestine. The Israeli occupation authorities, and the American administration that stands behind them, cannot continue to ignore the national will, which is now unanimous on the necessity of holding an international peace conference on the Middle East and enabling the Palestinian people to gain their national rights, foremost among which is their right to self-determination and national independence on their own national soil.

In the light of this, and toward the reinforcement of the steadfastness and blessed *intifada* of our people, and in accordance with the will of our masses in and outside of our homeland, and in fidelity to those of our people that have been martyred, wounded or taken captive, the Palestine National Council resolves:

FIRST: ON THE ESCALATION AND CONTINUITY OF THE *INTIFADA*

a. To provide all the means and capabilities needed to escalate our people's *intifada* in various ways and on various levels to guarantee its continuation and intensification.
b. To support the popular institutions and organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories.
c. To bolster and develop the Popular Committees and other specialized popular and trade union bodies, including the attack groups and the popular army, with a view to expanding their role and increasing their effectiveness.
d. To consolidate the national unity that emerged and developed during the *intifada*.
e. To intensify efforts on the international level for the release of detainees, the return of those expelled, and the termination of the organized, official acts of repression and terrorism against our children, our women, our men, and our institutions.

f. To call on the United Nations to place the occupied Palestinian land under international supervision for the protection of our people and the termination of the Israeli occupation.
g. To call on the Palestinian people outside our homeland to intensify and increase their support, and to expand the family-assistance program.
h. To call on the Arab nation, its people, forces, institutions and government, to increase their political material and informational support for the *intifada.*
i. To call on all free and honorable people worldwide to stand by our people, our revolution, our *intifada* against the Israeli occupation, the repression, and the organized, fascist official terrorism to which the occupation forces and the armed fanatic settlers are subjecting our people, our universities, our institutions, our national economy, and our Islamic and Christian holy places.

SECOND: IN THE POLITICAL ARENA

Proceeding from the above, the Palestine National Council, being responsible to the Palestinian people, their national rights and their desire for peace as expressed in the Declaration of Independence issued on November 15, 1988; and in response to the humanitarian quest for international entente, nuclear disarmament and the settlement of regional conflict by peaceful means, affirms the determination of the Palestine Liberation Organization to arrive at a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, which is the question of Palestine, within the framework of the United Nations Charter, the principles and provisions of international legality, the norms of international law, and the resolutions of the United Nations, the latest of which are Security Council Resolutions 605, 607 and 608, and the resolutions of the Arab summits, in such a manner that safeguards the Palestinian Arab people's rights to return, to self-determination and the establishment of their independent national state on their national soil, and that institutes arrangements for the security and peace of all states in the region.

Toward the achievement of this, the Palestine National Council affirms—

1. The necessity of convening the effective international conference on the issue of the Middle East and its core, the question of Palestine, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict in the region including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people on an equal footing, and by considering that the international peace conference be convened on the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the attainment of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, foremost amongst which is the right to self-determination and in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Charter concerning the right of peoples to self-determination, and by the inadmissibility of the acquisition of the territory of others by force or military conquest, and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine.
2. The withdrawal of Israel from all the Palestinian and Arab territories it occupied in 1967, including Arab Jerusalem.
3. The annulment of all measures of annexation and appropriation and the removal of settlements established by Israel in the Palestinian and Arab territories since 1967.
4. Endeavoring to place the occupied Palestinian territories, including Arab Jerusalem, under the auspices of the United Nations for a limited period in order to protect our people and afford the appropriate atmosphere for the success of the proceeding of the international conference toward the attainment of a comprehensive political settlement and the attainment of peace and security for all on the basis of mutual acquiescence and consent, and to enable the Palestinian state to exercise its effective authority in these territories.
5. The settlement of the question of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.
6. Guaranteeing the freedom of worship and religious practice for all faiths in the Holy Places in Palestine.
7. The Security Council to formulate and guarantee arrangements for security and peace between all the states concerned in the region, including the Palestinian state.

The Palestine National Council affirms its previous resolutions concerning the distinctive relationship between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples, and affirms that the future relationship between the two states of Palestine and Jordan should be on a confederal basis as a result of the free and voluntary choice of the two fraternal peoples in order to strengthen the historical bonds and the vital interests they hold in common.

The Palestine National Council also renews its commitment to the United Nations resolutions that affirm the right of peoples to resist foreign occupation, colonialism and racial discrimination, and their right to struggle for their independence, and reiterates its rejection of terrorism in all its forms, including state terrorism, affirming its commitment to previous resolutions in this respect and the resolution of the Arab summit in Algiers in 1988, and to U.N. Resolutions 42/195 of 1987, and 40/61 of 1985, and that contained in the Cairo declaration of 1985 in this respect.

THIRD: IN THE ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL ARENAS

The Palestine National Council emphasizes the importance of the unity of Lebanon in its territory, its people and its institutions, and stands firmly against the attempts to partition the land and disintegrate the fraternal people of Lebanon. It further emphasizes the importance of the joint Arab effort to participate in a settlement of the Lebanese crisis that helps crystallize and implement solutions that preserve Lebanese unity. The Palestine National Council also stresses the importance of consecrating the right of the Palestinians in Lebanon to engage in political and informational activity and to enjoy security and protection; and of working against all the forms of conspiracy and aggression that target them and their right to work and live; and of the need to secure the conditions that assure them the ability to defend themselves and provide them with security and protection.

The Palestine National Council affirms its solidarity with the Lebanese nationalist Islamic forces in their struggle against the Israeli occupation and its agents in the Lebanese South; expresses its pride in the allied struggle of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples against the aggression and toward the termination of the Israeli occupation of parts of the South; and underscores the importance of bolstering this kinship between our peoples and the fraternal, resistant people of Lebanon.

And on this occasion, the Palestine National Council addresses a reverent salute to the longsuffering people in our camps in Lebanon and its South, who are enduring the aggression, murder, starvation, destruction, air raids, bombardments and sieges perpetrated against the Palestinian camps and Lebanese villages by the Israeli army, air force and navy, aided and abetted by hireling forces in the region; and it rejects the resettlement conspiracy, for the Palestinian homeland is Palestine.

The Palestine National Council emphasizes the importance of the Iraq-Iran ceasefire resolution toward the establishment of a permanent peace between the two countries and in the Gulf region, and calls for an intensification of the efforts being exerted to ensure the success of the negotiations toward the establishment of stable and firm foundations; affirming, on this occasion, the pride of the Palestinian Arab people and the Arab nation as a whole in the steadfastness and triumphs of fraternal Iraq as it defended the eastern gate of the Arab nation.

The Palestine National Council also expresses its deep pride in the stand taken by the peoples of our Arab nation in support of our Palestinian Arab people and of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of our people's *intifada* in the occupied homeland; and emphasizes the importance of fortifying the bonds of resistance among the forces, parties and organizations in the Arab national liberation movement, in defense of the right of the Arab nation and its peoples to liberation, democracy, and unity. The

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Palestine National Council calls for the adoption of all measures needed to reinforce the unity of struggle among all members of the Arab national liberation movement.

The Palestine National Council, as it hails the Arab states and thanks them for their support of our people's struggle, calls on them to honor the commitments they approved at the summit conference in Algiers in support of the Palestinian people and their blessed *intifada*. The Palestine National Council, in issuing this appeal, expresses its great confidence that the leaders of the Arab nation will remain, as we have known them, a bulwark of support for Palestine and its people.

The Palestine National Council reiterates the desire of the Palestine Liberation Organization for Arab solidarity as the framework within which the Arab nation and its states organize themselves to confront Israel's aggression and within which Arab prestige can be enhanced and the Arab role strengthened to the point of influencing international policies to the benefit of Arab rights and causes.

The Palestine National Council expresses its deep gratitude to all the states and international forces and organizations that support the national rights of the Palestinians, and affirms its desire to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the other socialist countries, the nonaligned states, the Latin American states and the other friendly states, and notes with satisfaction the signs of positive evolution in the position of some West European states and Japan in the direction of support for the rights of the Palestinian people, applauds this development, and urges the intensified efforts to increase it.

The Palestine National Council affirms the fraternal solidarity of the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization with the struggle of the people's of Asia, Africa and Latin America for their liberation and reinforcement of their independence; and condemns all American attempts that threaten the independence of the states of Central America and interfere in their affairs.

The Palestine National Council expresses the support of the Palestine Liberation Organization for the national liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO against Pretoria's racist regime.

The Palestine National Council expresses the support of the Palestine Liberation Organization for the national liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia—with a special salute to our brother combatant, Nelson Mandela—against the racist regime of Pretoria; demands that the people of the two countries be enabled to attain their liberty and independence; and also expresses its support for the African confrontation states and its condemnation of the racist South Africa regime's aggression against them.

The Palestine National Council notes with considerable concern the growth of the Israeli forces of fascism and extremism and the escalation of their open calls for the implementation of their policy of annihilation and individual and mass expulsion of our people from their homeland, and calls for intensified efforts in all arenas to confront this fascist peril. The Palestine National Council at the same time expresses its appreciation of the role and courage of the Israeli peace forces as they resist and expose the forces of fascism, racism and aggression, support our people's struggle and their valiant *intifada*, and back our people's right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state. The Palestine National Council confirms its past resolutions regarding the reinforcement and development of relations with these democratic forces.

The Palestine National Council also addresses itself to the American people, calling on them all to strive to put an end to the American policy that denies the Palestinian people's national rights, including their sacred right to self-determination, and urging them to work toward the adoption of policies that conform with the human rights charter and the international conventions and resolutions and serve the quest for peace in the Middle East and security for all its peoples, including the Palestinian people.

The Palestine National Council charges the Executive Committee with the task of completing the formation of the Committee for the Perpetuation of the Memory of the Martyr Abu Jihad, which shall initiate its work immediately upon the adjournment of the Palestine National Council.

The Palestine National Council sends its greetings to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and to the fraternal and friendly international and nongovernmental institutions and organizations, and to the journalists and media that have stood and still stand by our people's struggle and *intifada*.

The Palestine National Council expresses deep pain at the continued detention of hundreds of combatants from amongst our people in a number of Arab countries, strongly condemns their continued detention, and calls upon these countries to put an end to these abnormal conditions and release those fighters to play their role in the struggle.

In conclusion, the Palestine National Council affirms its complete confidence that the justice of the Palestinian cause and of the demands for which the Palestinian people are struggling will continue to draw increasing support from honorable and free people around the world; and also affirms its complete confidence in victory on the road to Jerusalem, the capital of our independent Palestinian state. ■

***STATEHOOD,** from page 26*

the referendums were undertaken at all "demonstrates that activists are attempting to do something very tangible in translating public support in favor of a Palestinian state into policy. Polls show that the American public has been greatly impressed by the *Intifadah,* but that shift hasn't been translated. The referendums are vehicles to translate public support of Palestinian rights into concrete political gains."

And Jim Zogby, executive director of the Arab American Institute in Washington, D.C., notes that the referendums are just one part of a larger whole: "The holding of the referendums cannot be separated from everything that happened in the last year: the Uprising, the Jackson campaign, and the work in the 10 state conventions and thousands of local precincts. The overall record of '88 is an enormous set of victories, not just the elections. Having a debate and building coalitions becomes itself the vehicle that carries us beyond the election to create a new national American consensus," he said.

Zogby sees the next step as being a national meeting of all the local groups who have been working independently of one another. "If we have learned any lesson," he said, "it is that we have clearly moved beyond the information phase in our work. We don't need to inform the public, but rather to organize according to the rules of political organization that make sense in America. We need to translate all of our work into a change in policy and power. This was the first time we joined the game. We said we want to be out on the playing field where the opposition is, not outside the stadium." ■

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WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

On the Road to Freedom

Raymonda Tawil

I witnessed the birth of the State of Palestine—in Jerusalem—its occupied Capital.

The moment the State was declared, Yasser Arafat's voice eloquently and solemnly sounded across the small transistors in every town, every village, and every refugee camp in the West Bank and Gaza.

The 1.7 million Palestinians living under occupation were forced to celebrate the creation of the State under curfew, without heat, electricity, or telephones. This was Israel's way of preventing Palestinians from celebrating.

Nevertheless, that moment carried with it hopes for a brighter future and the prospects of freedom. We felt new warmth, and a tremendous sense of pride.

I looked out at Jerusalem: a silent city on that most beautiful night. I sat alone and cried the tears of joy.

The following day, I walked through the streets of Jerusalem toward the offices of the Palestine Press Service, the news agency I established in 1978, and which was closed in May of 1988 by order of Israel's military government. People were jubilant and their happiness could not be contained.

Israel radio was warning people of five-year prison terms for expressing happiness, singing nationalist songs, or displaying the Palestinian flag. Flags were raised anyway, people celebrated and sang. Church bells rang, and the Declaration was read over the loudspeakers of mosques.

Many people were arrested as a result. But, so what? We have conquered fear. Besides, Israel could not confiscate our happiness and joy as they did our possessions and land.

The Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine meant more to all Palestinians because it is the product of Palestinian national unity. Palestinian groups of all different political persuasions, and in full harmony, supported and participated in drafting the Declaration of Independence. To the entire world, the Palestinians demonstrated that they could act together for the higher good of the people.

The Declaration of Independence meant more to the Palestinian people because of all places, aside from Palestine itself, it was proclaimed in Algeria—a country that suffered hundreds of thousands of casualties fighting for its own independence and freedom.

The Declaration of Independence meant more to all Palestinians because it was watered and nurtured with the blood of the Palestinian martyrs including Abu Jihad.

Not even the U.S. decision to reject the Declaration of Independence and to downplay the political concessions made by the Palestinian leadership will dampen the Palestinian people's determination to keep fighting for their independence and freedom. What a shame that a great country such as the United States is so unduly influenced and blinded by Israel.

With or without U.S. support, the Palestinian people are on the road to freedom and independence. No country or power has the ability to suppress that deep-rooted yearning for freedom.

From Jerusalem, the holiest city in the world, the Capital of the State of Palestine, I salute all those struggling for freedom and all those who cherish the freedom of others as much as they cherish their own.

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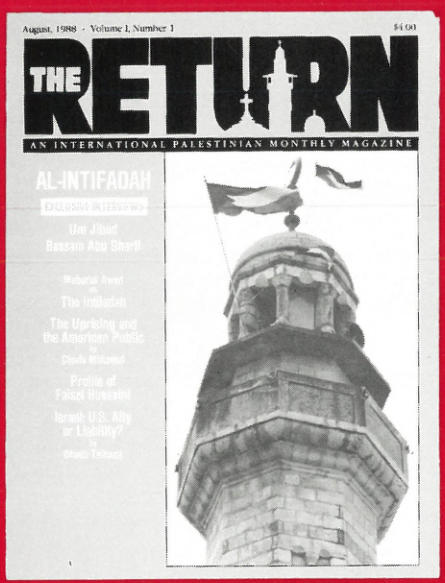

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